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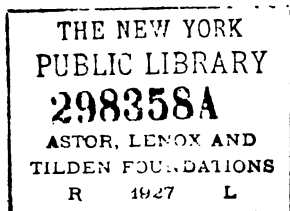


THE PERSONAL NARRATIVES
OF
"George Stevens" and "Jimmy Wilson,"
LATE
BURGLARS AND GAMBLERS;
NOW
FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST:
CONVERTED, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY.

NEW YORK.

1876.

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Introductory.

THE following biographical sketches of the criminal career and ultimate conversion to Christianity (at the gospel meetings held in the Hippodrome under the auspices of Messrs. MOODY and SANKEY) of two notorious characters, types of their class, who have figured somewhat conspicuously in the annals of crime and the Courts of Justice, will serve a fourfold purpose :

First—To show that miraculous power of God which manifests itself in the spiritual influences possessed and exercised by His sincere servants in effecting wonderful changes in the very natures of men, by depriving them “instantly” of all desire to use opium or intoxicating liquors ; by depriving bad men of the disposition to do wrong ; by converting Jews to the Christian faith ; by reforming blasphemers and rude men, so that they become gentle and well-spoken ; convincing infidels that there is indeed a God—all of which has been done by the true servants of Christ, time and again, and notably so by Mr. MOODY aided by Mr. SANKEY, in many of the great cities of America and England.

Second—They will serve to point a moral, in

respect to the certain punishment which overtakes the evil-doer.

Third—They may deter others from entering upon the disgraceful and perilous life of the thief, the burglar, or the gambler.

Fourth—They are designed to aid reformed burglars in a commendable effort to make an honest livelihood.

In the study of the peculiar phase of human nature afforded by a perusal of these personal narratives, it will be seen that there appears to be no such condition as unmitigated evil—at least as far as these men and their associates are concerned ; for it is quite evident that they always had, within the hidden recesses of their natures, germs of goodness, manifesting themselves in acts of humanity and deeds of true charity. Upon the poor and unfortunate who came under their especial notice, they never hesitated to bestow some portion of their ill-gotten gains, and it was done, seemingly, and we trust actually, with a heart-felt sympathy.

They were also true and steadfast in their friendships ; “standing by each other” in misfortune, even more tenaciously than when their lives were comparatively unclouded. Any one of them, “when sick and in a prison cell,” knew that his companions were hard at work outside, with money, personal risk, and unceas-

ing effort, endeavoring to effect his release. Everything that money could furnish to make the prisoner more comfortable was readily supplied, and with a hearty good-will. To be truthful in their dealings with each other was an especial practice—as a matter of policy, it may be urged ; because to have deceived each other would have thwarted all their plans and caused almost irretrievable ruin. But these men must have possessed an innate respect for truthfulness, else they never could have practiced that virtue, even as a matter of policy, to the extent and degree which was needed in their peculiar profession.

“Stanch and true” to one another, strictly just, honorable, and conscientious in the division of the common spoil, it would appear as though these singular men were possessed of dual natures, one side of which presented the character of unscrupulous villainy, as practiced towards society in general, while on the other side, honesty and truthfulness characterized all their personal dealings one with the other.

Take, for instance, as an illustration of the latter, the fact that in setting apart a certain percentage of the net result of their robberies, a “wad” was made of the amount, and that “wad” was placed in the safe of some responsible “saloon” keeper, and there held in reserve for business purposes, or great and pressing emergencies. Any member of the gang could have drawn a portion or the whole of such

deposit; and had one of them been disposed to represent to its custodian that the "wad" was needed for an emergency, it would have been delivered to the applicant without a moment's hesitation.

Such a loose way of banking, it must be acknowledged, would scarcely answer among other certain classes of men who pride themselves upon the possession of a large share of "respectability," as the poor "freedmen" and others know to their sorrow.

It is a remarkable fact, also, that when such strong ties of friendship exist, as between the "Planner," "JIMMY WILSON, and the "Leader," GEORGE STEVENS, each was ready to sacrifice himself for the other, even at the risk of life and liberty.

The bonds that held these rough and desperate men together were those of entire trust in each other's integrity, honor, and courage—albeit, somewhat strengthened by the usual and well-known consequences of a betrayal of confidence, for all men value their lives, more or less. To "blow the gaff" (betray) is not only to incur the contempt, anger, and general denunciation of the professional burglar, but personal violence is the almost certain penalty of this outrage, which, as we have said, is looked upon with especial abhorrence.

It will be seen, therefore, that even in the course of their evil lives, such men possess many of those traits of character which are justly held up as being

admirable; so that it would appear as though it only needed those attributes of their better natures to be directed aright, in order to make them harmless and useful citizens, and, by the grace of God, good men. Even in the following pages, wherein their daring and desperate acts of outlawry are narrated, these men are exceedingly careful not to mention names, or specify times, places, or circumstances with sufficient minuteness to betray or criminate any of their former associates. For the reason just stated, the name and deeds of a former leader of the gang, who but recently expiated his crimes upon the gallows, are withheld from all mention in the following pages.

With a consideration and delicacy which would do honor to any man, or class of men, these reformed burglars say they will not wound the sensibilities of their former leader's relatives and connections by recounting deeds, a knowledge of the perpetration of which could but add another pang to their sorrowing hearts.

In fact, there is a "divine spark" in the breast of every human being, however depraved he or she may be; and it only requires that spark to be kindled by the breath of God, through the instrumentality of his inspired servants, to burst into a flame and reillumine the soul that erewhile dwelt in darkness.

It is the heaven-appointed work of the sincere Christian ministers and laymen of those churches

whose foundations rest upon the grace, the power, and the love of the Father, and of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, to save just such sinners as the two whose wild career of crime is recorded in the pages of this book.

The same Christian influences which caused these two men, and have caused many others in a like condition to pause upon the verge of the pit that was yawning at their feet, and which saved them "like brands plucked from the burning," can be brought to bear upon others in like peril of perdition, so that they also will be changed in heart, and be made to love and glorify the Saviour.

Indeed, some few working Christians propose to devote much of their time to the good work of redeeming criminals, in and out of prison, by bringing spiritual influences to bear directly upon that tender spot in their hearts which can only be reached by a sympathy, love, and tenderness born of Christ. With this object in view, it is proposed to form a fund to be derived from such voluntary contributions as may be furnished by those true and practical Christians whom Providence has bountifully blessed with means, and who may approve the plan given in detail in the appendix to this volume.

Thus much by way of preface; and now the late leader of a gang of burglars and desperadoes will speak for himself.

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THE NARRATIVE
OF
GEORGE STEVENS,
LATE
Burglar and Gambler.

CHAPTER I.

A Wild and Wayward Boy—Theft—Arrest and Sentence.

MY parents were respectable people, in good circumstances, and lived in the Eighth Ward of the city of New York. My mother died when I was four years of age. I was a wild and reckless boy, destructive in my propensities, and delighted in breaking anything that came within my reach. At the early age of eleven I began to steal. My father was too much absorbed in business matters to pay any attention to my conduct, and I was left in charge of a woman who found it impossible to control me. I was in the habit of absenting myself from school, and, like all truants, I soon fell into bad company, my own cousin being my constant companion, and it was he who first taught me to steal. When my good father would not give

me money to pay for theatre tickets, or for other disreputable purposes, I stole the "needful" wherever I could lay my hands upon it. I was a frequent visitor to that once notorious variety saloon and theatre, well known, in its day, as "444 Broadway," which was the cause of ruining so many boys and girls. There I learned to smoke and drink. I thought it a great thing to be called "one of the boys." I continued in this career for some time; but I was caught at last, when only eleven years of age, while robbing a milkman, and taken to the station-house by a police officer. The boys sent cigars and tobacco to me, in my cell. My father came to the station-house as soon as he heard of my arrest, but he could not get me off, so I had to remain until next morning. It was a long and tedious night to me, but I was not afraid, for fear was something I knew nothing about, as will appear in the course of my narrative. All sorts of criminals were brought in that night; some with their heads cut open, cursing and swearing, while others were under the excitement of liquor, and danced and sang in their cells, using profane language; but I was so hardened in sin, that it did not shock me at the time. One man commenced to cry, and when I told him to stop, he abused me, at which I struck him with one of my shoes.

I was glad when the day began to break, and soon I had a good hot breakfast, sent in to me by my kind father. After breakfast, several of us were taken towards the court-house, a few blocks away. The officer who had me in charge had hold of the collar of my coat, and I determined to escape, if possible; so I slipped out of my jacket, leaving that article of wearing apparel in the officer's hand, and scampered off at

the top of my speed, making good my escape, and remaining away from home three days. On the third night I ventured to return, and was caught again, and taken back to the same station-house. The resistance I made was so great that the officer became very angry, and would have struck me but for the consideration of my age and size. Another officer was soon at hand, and it required the united exertions of the two to take me in. The people in the street laughed at the officers, which tended still more to exasperate them, and it is a wonder they did not club me, for I richly deserved a good beating. Again I attempted to escape by tripping up the officers, but we all fell together, and I was hurt the most of any. My captors were now so justly provoked that they could scarcely refrain from striking me, but fortunately they did not, for there were so many hard characters among the crowd, who sympathized with me, that had I been clubbed there would have been a desperate and general fight on the spot.

The rough handling I had been subjected to was evident to the Judge, and he rebuked the officers for it; but they excused themselves by saying it would require a dozen officers to get me along without liability of injury to some one.

On appearing before the Judge the next day, he asked me what I had done, and I told him I had stolen some money. He threatened to send me for twenty-one years to the House of Correction, at which I only laughed. My sentence was two years' confinement in the House of Correction, where I learned still more about stealing, and everything that was bad, so that I left that institution at the termination of my term of sentence a much worse boy than when I entered it.

My father received me home kindly, and gave me a great deal of good advice; but I was incorrigible, and it did me no good. I told him I was going to the country, and asked him for ten dollars, which he gave me, and I left him weeping, and did not see him again for three long years, during which time I was occupied in stealing, picking pockets, etc.

CHAPTER II.

Operating on a Larger Scale—A Stormy Night's Adventure.

As I progressed in the career of crime, I became more ambitious, and resolved to strike out for a bolder line of action, and for larger sums of money. I therefore formed a gang of twelve members, and subsequently added to the number a "planner," whose duty it was to obtain situations in stores and houses, upon which it was our intention to operate according to the plans and general information furnished us by this boy, whom I knew to be very smart, active, and courageous. He was known as "Jim Davis," and was only nine years of age when I enticed him away from his home. He had already served a term of two years in the Reformatory, where, he told me, he had learned no good of any kind. This boy became greatly attached to us, and wanted to go with us on all our expeditions. Sometimes we would send him to a large factory, or other extensive establishment, to get a job of work, and he would soon find out where the money was kept, and ascertain the weak points of ingress and egress, and then report to us the best plan

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of procedure to rob the place. Jimmy was very efficient, and many thousands of dollars were thus obtained through his smartness and daring. He was ruthless and reliable in every way. Many inducements were held out to him by other gangs to join them, but he could not be bought.

Our gang now numbered thirteen, and we concluded to engage in river piracy. In this line we stole from the docks, and vessels secured thereto, as well as from boats lying at anchor in the stream, large quantities of iron, cotton, tea, and whatever else was of sufficient value to excite our cupidity. We had at one time three boats engaged in this nefarious work, and continued to follow it up for one year. We were successful, and made a great deal of money, notwithstanding that we had to take from the "fences" (receivers of stolen goods) half, or less than half the value of our spoils. In the course of our piratical career on the river, we were often subjected to great danger; our lives and liberty alike being in constant peril.

One dark and stormy night in the month of March, we were out on the river, making our way as best we could among the cakes of ice, floating down towards Staten Island, on the lookout for vessels laden with any merchandise which might be valuable to us. A cold sleet and blustering, penetrating wind added to our misery as we toiled at our oars—sometimes putting them to the use for which they were originally designed, but oftener in pushing aside the heavy cakes of ice which obstructed our progress. There was danger all around, and the excitement incident to the peril of our situation kept us alive to all that was passing. Our boat was tossed about and ground against the edges of the ice in such a manner as to

threaten destruction at any moment we might relax our vigilance or cease our efforts to extricate ourselves from our now serious predicament. While so employed, one of our party called our attention to the increasing flow of ice, and its tendency to pile up, one sheet rising above another, thus increasing our chances of being crushed ere we could reach a point of safety. To make for the shore was now determined upon, and we had just completed our arrangements to accomplish our purpose, if possible, when we heard a cry of distress in the distance, apparently emanating from the Jersey side. With breathless silence we listened, and again the wailing sound came to our ears, and we exclaimed, with almost one voice, that the cry proceeded from some human being in great peril. We immediately answered with loud shouts that we would come to the rescue, and then, though almost perished as we were, we put our boat about, and started in the direction from whence the cries came. Only those who have been similarly tried can realize the degree of effort which now became necessary to preserve our boat from utter demolition; but our brave hearts were rendered doubly brave, and our sinewy arms received additional strength by the frantic screams of the person whom we had determined to save, and with almost superhuman strength we fairly carried our leaky boat across the intervening fields of ice, now made rough and jagged by extreme pressure from the rapidly accumulating masses of the frozen element, as they came crashing down the rapid stream. We had now approached sufficiently near to discover that the cries came from a woman. Every word uttered by the unfortunate sufferer was now distinctly heard, and she piteously implored us to save her and her children from

destruction. We assured her of immediate rescue, and we were making good headway, but every second must have appeared to her an eternity of time. In agonizing accents which pierced our hearts, she begged us for God's sake to hasten, as she was almost frozen.

The shrill voices of children could now be heard mingling with the louder cries of the mother, as we drew nearer; and calling out to the struggling woman, I asked her how many children she had with her? She cried out, in piteous tones, "I have three little children, and a babe in my arms. Rescue us for the love of God; and be quick about it, or we shall all be frozen to death." With renewed assurances of speedy relief, we fought our way through the driving sleet, over the piles of gorged ice, and in the face of the keen, cutting blast, until at last we caught the woman and children in our stalwart but wearied arms, and bore them to our trusty boat, which had resisted the terrible strain upon her ribs as though made of steel.

Taking off our overcoats, we carefully wrapped the children in them, and shielding the devoted mother as well as we could from the pitiless storm, we began to work our way slowly but steadily toward the land whither the strong wind was driving us, well knowing that we could have made but little headway in the teeth of the gale. Our self-imposed task was now rendered much more difficult, owing to the additional weight we were obliged to carry, but we were not the men to flinch from any responsibility like that which now rested upon us.

The Lost Sloop—The Field of Ice.

It was no time for conversation, but the woman, in answer to my inquiries, gave me the main points of

her adventures, which, together with a more extended explanation subsequently given, are embraced in the following narrative of her sufferings. She had been left with her children on a sloop at anchor in the stream, by her husband and his crew, they having gone to the city on a drunken carousal.

The captain and his men had been gone about two hours when the floe of ice, receiving additional speed and force from the breaking up of the deposits in the tributaries of the Hudson, came down against the sloop with tremendous force, tearing her from her moorings, and dashing her against a monstrous cake of ice at her stern, thus holding and guiding her between the descending masses and the accumulations below.

The sloop was badly damaged, and sprang a leak through a hole made in her starboard bow. The deserted wife and mother, accustomed to the rude ways and rough work of a seafaring life, and often obliged to face danger and impending death, took in the situation at a glance, and determined upon a line of action, almost intuitively.

Settling down rapidly, the vessel could no longer be depended upon, and there was no alternative but to leave her to a fate which was now inevitable, and trust to the buoyancy and strength of the great fields of ice by which she was surrounded.

The severely tried but dauntless mother, retarded in her movements by the frantic children who clung to her skirts, and by her infant child which instinctively threw its arms about its mother's neck, strove in every possible way to allay the fears of her little ones, while she made such hasty preparations as she could, under the terrible circumstances, to leave the sinking sloop.

Many, thus abandoned, save by the Almighty,

ould have sunk down upon the deck of the doomed vessel in the dull apathy of utter despair; but the tough life of this woman had nerved her for such occasions, while the motherly instinct was so strong within her that she arose to the sublime height of heroism.

When about to secure a blanket or two, and a few other articles which might be needed upon the ice, the poor creature discovered to her dismay that the vessel had settled down until her deck was almost on a level with the sea of ice by which she was environed. There was nothing for her to do now but to thrust her children, one after the other in quick succession, out upon the ice with all the strength she had left, and then follow them, her almost frozen babe still clasped to her maternal breast.

All this she did quickly—and as the hen gathers her chickens, so did this fond mother call about her her flock of little sufferers and shelter them from the pitiless blast, without heeding her own exposure.

Kneeling in the midst of her tender offspring, the Christian woman offered up a fervent prayer to the throne of the God of mercy. She prayed that He would protect her little ones, and be indeed a Father to them in this their time of greatest peril.

Her fervent supplication finished, she arose to her feet with renewed faith, hope, and strength; for such are the rich gifts bestowed by the Father upon all who believe in Him and ask His aid in the hour of need. Truly, our extremity is God's opportunity, and "His ways are not as our ways." Who but a Christian could have imagined that "He who doeth all things well" would have made us (depraved and wicked men) instruments in His hands to save one of His

own children, and unwittingly to glorify him in the act?

To penetrate the darkness was impossible, and after gazing around in the vain hope of discerning the light of some vessel at anchor, or perchance a passing steamer, the woman knew that loud outcries only might bring relief. To this last resort she applied herself with all the power her lungs possessed, while the voices of the children happily increased the volume of the sound. These were the tones of distress that reached our ears, just in time to bring us, as the poor instruments of a gracious God, to the succor of the suffering creatures who had not applied to Him in vain.

More Troubles on the Bay of Ice—Boat, Ahoy! The Rescue.

We had just reached a clear space of water, and had launched our stanch craft into her native element, when a rumbling noise, as of a ferry-boat pounding her way through the impeding ice-fields, was heard in the distance. In breathless silence we listened to the welcome sound, and after some little reflection we felt sure that a Staten Island ferry-boat was on her way to the city, and we hopefully canvassed the probability that we were in the line of her route.

Gazing intently in the direction of the sound as nearly as we could make it out, and yet conscious of the fact that a stiff breeze like the one blowing at the time would carry the reverberations rapidly away from the point of their emanation, our sharp-eyed "Jimmy" soon exclaimed, "A light on the starboard

ow!" Presently we could all discern in the mid distance a faint and glimmering spark as it were, but enough to gladden our hearts and inspire us with hope.

↓ We knew that it could not be very far distant, else the dense mist and darkness would have obscured it from our vision.

↓ But soon our spirits were greatly depressed, for it became apparent that the steamer was not heading for us, although we did not abandon the hope of making ourselves heard.

With intense anxiety we awaited the moment when the passing boat should reach the point which in our judgment would be the best hailing distance, and we had not long to wait, although she was struggling hard against the ice-charged current sweeping down the Bay. At the opportune moment, and guided by a concerted signal, we all raised our voices to their highest pitch, and threw them into a combined shout of "Steamer, ahoy!" thrice repeated. The wind was blowing in just the direction best calculated to render our shouts inaudible. No answer came, and only the same rumbling sound of paddle-wheels in the distance as they struck the floating fragments of ice, together with the more immediate moans and cries of the children in the boat, were heard, as we listened for a scarcely expected response.

Again and again we hailed the steamer, but with no better success. One of our gang now lost patience, and, cursing our ill-luck, blasphemed the name of our Lord and Saviour. Turning upon the poor woman, he savagely charged her with being the cause of our trouble, which was likely to end in the destruction of us all. Shocked to the soul, the almost heart-broken

woman could not answer for a moment; but recovering her composure, she meekly said :

“ Oh, sir ! God knows I would gladly give my life to save you and my children—for myself I do not care. I will pray for you ! ”

Saying which she placed herself in the attitude of devotion, and prayed in the most touching manner, supplicating the Saviour to preserve those who had periled their own lives for her sake, to still the tempest as he had done to save the lives of his disciples, and to soften the hearts of those who take His blessed name in vain. Ceasing to pray, the good mother, as soon as she could choke down the sobs that came from the depths of her troubled soul, kissed her little ones affectionately, and offered to leave the boat and trust to the ice and the guiding hand of God, rather than imperil the lives of her preservers by remaining. This we would not allow, and joined in one voice of reassurance that all should be either saved or lost together.

At this moment I saw, away off to our left, another glimmering, flickering light, and pointed it out to my companions. Every eye was at once directed towards this new object of interest, and we were about to mingle our voices in a concentrated shout, as before, when the welcome words, “ Boat, ahoy ! ” came cheerily across the gloomy waste of ice.

Our answering shout, “ Ahoy ! ahoy ! ahoy ! ” was given with all the power of voice at our command, and almost like an echo, “ Ahoy ! ahoy ! ahoy ! ” reverberated from the darkness.

“ O God of mercy ! my prayer is answered ! ” cried the woman in the boat, and again her low and beseeching tones were heard as she prayed that we might all be spared.

We were now floating down the Bay along what appeared to be a channel filled with small pieces of ice, which had the appearance of having been broken from the larger masses by the paddles of a steamer. The light became clearer and the voices more distinct, and now we knew that were approaching both, without the need of any effort on our part, save to keep the boat steady, and free from the larger blocks of ice. On we floated, and soon the star of our hope proved to be a brilliant head-light on the bows of a large brigantine held at anchor in the same channel we had fortunately entered. A few moments sufficed to place our charge upon the decks of the vessel, and all were made welcome and comfortable by the captain and master, who proved to be noble-hearted tars, and an honor to their profession.

A few words of explanation were given, and we were surprised to learn that the first hailing shout we had heard was intended for another boat, as we had neither been seen nor heard; but it answered our purpose quite as well.

We failed in an attempt to disguise our calling, but the good captain and his companions said that no harm should come to us who had so humanely rescued a mother and her children from a peril which must have resulted in certain death but for our timely aid. At daybreak, feeling refreshed after an hour or two of sleep, and still more invigorated by a hearty breakfast, we were ready for any undertaking that would restore the mother and her children to their no doubt anxious but unworthy husband and father. We were informed, however, that a tug would be sent down by the owners of the brigantine, and we could all go up to the city together. About eleven o'clock the

tug made her appearance, and we reached the city in due time, where we placed the now happy mother and her prattling children in the care of a hotel-keeper. Placing a sufficient sum of money in the hands of the woman to provide for her immediate wants until she could find her husband, we took leave of her, but not before she had again and again reiterated her thanks and showered blessings upon our heads, assuring us at the same time that she would pray God to bless and protect us.

About this time a succession of catastrophes terribly depleted the number of our gang. One was shot for having proved treacherous to a member of another gang. Two were imprisoned. One died from consumption, and another from the effects of a half-ounce of lead received during one of our attempts to rob the docks. I was also severely wounded while in the act of carrying off some bales of silk, and I did not expect long to survive my injuries. I was taken home, and there confined in bed for two weary months, during which time my faithful companions in crime attended to all my wants, and paid the doctor's and other bills with a promptitude that might put to blush those moving in a different sphere. These steadfast but wicked men were my only attendants, and it may readily be supposed that I did not improve much either in my manners or my morals during my tedious and painful confinement to the house. At last my strong constitution and skillful medical treatment prevailed, and at the expiration of two months I was ready for another raid upon the depositories of wealth scattered throughout the land, regardless of all danger alike to this poor body and my immortal soul.

CHAPTER III.

The Burning Steamer—Pirates to the Rescue.

ONE night, while out on a piratical expedition on the Havre-de-Grace River, with eight other members of the gang, we pulled out in two boats to a steamer in the stream, with passengers and a cargo of silk on board. We soon relieved her of several bales of that valuable material, which we deposited upon the shore. Returning shortly for a further supply of plunder, what was our surprise, on approaching the steamer, to discover that she was on fire, the flames starting up with astonishing suddenness. Alarm and consternation seized upon the passengers and crew, and amid great confusion we approached the steamer near enough to be discerned by the captain, who at once understood our business, as our previous robberies had made us somewhat famous in that vicinity. The passengers were soon informed of our character, and while the captain did not seem to expect any aid from us, yet hoping we might conclude to assist him, called out :

“ You river pirates, haven't you any mercy ? ”

Our heartless response was characteristic of our nefarious calling. We told him to save himself, and refused to help them. But soon the cries of the women and children caused us to relent, and we called out to the captain to throw us some oars, as we had broken all of ours by an accident while approaching the steamer, excepting one, with which we were sculling. Suspicious, however, of our intentions, the captain did not comply with our request ; but fortunately, our other boat's crew, coming up at this critical moment, furnished us with a pair of oars, and then we

all went to work in good earnest, receiving panic-stricken passengers as rapidly as they could be transferred from the decks of the burning steamer to our own large row-boat. Hastening to the shore with our two cargoes of women and children, we quickly returned, and had taken into the boat several more passengers, when it was found that the flames were being rapidly subdued, and that further effort on our part was unnecessary. Those whom we had rescued from the burning steamer were very grateful, and expressed themselves as being satisfied that we were not altogether lost to human sympathy. Among the number were several Christians, who promised to pray for our salvation; and I sincerely believe their prayers have been heard, with many others which have ascended to the mercy-seat of God in my behalf, until the merciful Father has at last heard and answered their supplications.

At Havre-de-Grace there was but little to be done, but that little we soon accomplished, and carried off from the town such plunder as we could secure without incurring much risk, which, together with the results of our river operations, amounted in the aggregate to some six thousand dollars' worth of goods of various kinds. This we packed away snugly into our trusty boats, and making for a convenient point on the Chesapeake Bay, disembarked, and soon realized from a "fence" an amount of cash, less the discount, which enabled us to enter New York city with enough working capital to start us afresh in the old and familiar field of our former exploits.

Our expert Jimmy soon "planned" for us a large silk establishment, into which we made our way by the help of a good "kit of tools," and were rewarded (if it may be so called) with an abundance of this world's

goods, while the merchants were so much the poorer. From this establishment we got away with about ten thousand dollars' worth of silks, etc., realizing therefrom some five thousand five hundred dollars in cash.

But money so obtained seemed to vanish like the morning mist before the rising sun. It went to the gaming table, the fast houses, to liquor saloons, and everywhere else where deviltry reveled, and all the good a portion of it accomplished was some little alleviation of distress and trouble; for the flush burglar, if he has a good heart—and he generally has, in the sense of lavish generosity—never hesitates to give a portion of his stolen wealth to those objects of pity who come within the scope of his vision. For my part, I have this reflection to partially console me, that my hand was ever open to the poor and needy, and that, while most of the money I had so recklessly and dishonestly appropriated to my own use was squandered in a shameful and irrational manner, some portion of it was not spent in vain, nor could that portion at least be altogether unblessed.

CHAPTER IV.

Off for Chicago—Burglary—More Trouble.

OUR last robbery, the one committed subsequently to that just recorded, made it warm for us in the great city; so we started for Chicago, but remained there only a short time, as the police watched us pretty closely. We found it very difficult to do anything, but succeeded eventually in getting off with thirteen thousand dollars in cash, and sundry valuables, which

we secured at great peril, not only of our liberty, but our lives.

We had "spotted" an office in the city, which belonged to a great manufacturing concern just outside the corporate limits. Believing that a large amount of money was always kept in the safe, and that we should be amply rewarded for all the risks we should have to run in the attempt to secure the booty we had in view, we determined on "cracking" the office.

On a dark and gloomy night, somewhat stormy, but all the better for our purposes, three of us made our way over fences, through yards, and along an alleyway, until we reached a small court-yard upon which the back of the office abutted. Here we were detained some time in breathless silence, for we had appeared upon the scene of action a little too soon. The bookkeeper, whose duty it was to post his ledger before leaving the office, had been delayed beyond his accustomed hour of departure, and by the merest good fortune our alert "planner," Jimmy, discovered his presence just in time to arrest a catastrophe. The court-yard had no hiding-place in which we could conceal ourselves, and we were in constant dread of being discovered by the clerk, who we feared would be likely to step out into the court-yard at any moment.

From Jimmy's point of observation, he also discovered a large navy revolver hanging against the partition in the office, which formidable-looking weapon, together with the manly proportions of the bookkeeper, made matters look rather portentous of danger. In view of all our surroundings, we decided, almost without a whisper among ourselves, that dis-
n, in this particular case at least, was certainly

the better part of valor. Thus posted, and thus pinned as it were to the spot, there was nothing for us to do but await patiently the course of events. Presently the accountant closed his ledger, placed it in the safe, locked the door of the latter, put the key in his pocket, and taking his hat, hastily left the office, locking the door and thoughtfully trying it as he departed. We waited to hear the signal of safety from our "pals," who were watching in the street, they having been apprised of the condition of affairs by one of our party, who then returned to us. Shortly a peculiar whistle greeted our expectant ears, signifying "All right, the coast is clear," and then we put all our energies to the task of "cracking" the office.

Our tools were of the best quality, although few in number, and by no means cumbersome, so that we were soon within the sanctum of the capitalists. The safe was the object of our especial attention, and at it we went with all the strength, skill, and judgment which the experience of ten years' practice had given us. For nearly two hours we worked like beavers, or rather like blacksmiths, for the merchant's safe was a tough one, the best, in our judgment, that Herring ever made, or at least the most difficult one that we had ever tackled. At last we had the satisfaction of removing the final barrier that intervened between ourselves and the treasures we were seeking. Notes, bonds (of a character unavailable to us), and securities of various kinds, were hastily thrown aside; but when the greenbacks met our eyes, we secured them with great alacrity, and immediately prepared to retrace our steps. Not a second too soon were we ready to depart, for the "danger" signal was given just as the cash had been placed in my hands for safe-keeping.

Our flight was rapidly but quietly arranged. "Leave the kit, and away like cats," was the purport of our hasty council. With a leap through the window, that would have done honor to a well-practiced gymnast, we reached the top of the first fence, and had just dropped down on the other side of it, when the signal of "great danger" gave to our flight accelerated speed, and to our agile limbs additional activity and strength. Over fences, across yards, through the alleyway, and out into the street adjoining, we sped with the agility of apes and the speed of race-horses, and yet so quietly and cautiously that scarcely the least noise was made. We looked for no further signal from our watchful "pals," for they had done all that could have been expected, or was needed by us, and they would only have exposed themselves to the danger of detection had they signaled again. Therefore all we had to do was to make our way to the "rendezvous," where we soon had the pleasure of greeting our outside "chums," and sharing the proceeds of our night's adventure.

Thus far, everything had worked to our satisfaction, and we were congratulating ourselves to that effect, when, on the third day after the robbery just recounted, one of our men, acting somewhat injudiciously with his money, showing it too freely in large quantities, was arrested on suspicion, but fortunately not before he had passed his funds over to Jimmy, who was sitting at a table in the saloon where the arrest was made, and so adroitly did he secure the "swag" passed to him as quick as a flash, that the detective did not notice there was any acquaintance between the two men.

This movement made it safer for the one who was

arrested, because there is always danger of having marked or numbered bank-notes or greenbacks in hand.

After three months of strenuous effort on our part, and with an outlay of a large sum of money, we at last succeeded in getting our "pal" out of trouble. You will perceive, dear reader, how impossible it is to do wrong without serious injury to yourself, even in this life, to say nought of the life to come. Retribution, in some form, is as certain to follow crime as day follows night. The punishment may be tardy, for the "mills of God grind slowly, but grind exceeding small."

CHAPTER V.

Burglaries in Syracuse, Utica, and Texas—A Rescue—Badly Wounded.

FROM Chicago we started for Syracuse with only a remnant of the proceeds of our haul; for, as usual, our money appeared to have a curse resting upon it—indeed, it seemed as though every dollar bill was an instrument of evil sent by the devil to lead us into temptation—and we reached the latter city with just enough working capital in hand to answer our professional purposes until we could strike another "racket." But nothing presented itself to our notice here, so we went to Utica, and soon made a raise of \$12,000. Jimmy quickly planned something for us out in the environs of the city. At this suburban retreat we had to fight hard for all we got; but after a severe tussle with a farm-hand and a powerful watch-dog, we man-

aged to bag a good supply of silverware, some money, and a pretty haul of jewelry, watches, and choice clothing—in all worth about \$5,000.

In escaping with this booty we were subjected to a series of accidents and bruises, which again forced upon us the conviction that we could not wrong others without wronging ourselves even more than the victims of our depredations.

We now took a long flight to Texas, where we indulged in stealing, gambling, and kindred vices. Money flowed into our coffers, and took its departure nearly as fast. In a town in the eastern part of the State I was badly wounded by a pistol-shot, in the cause of two beautiful but unfortunate girls, who had foolishly yielded to the solicitations and lies of two villains who persuaded them to leave their homes and accompany the scoundrel on their travels throughout the Western States. The poor heart-broken and repentant girls, on discovering the true character of their betrayers, were anxious to return to their parents, for they had suffered terribly during their brief but eventful escapade. Although, as my narrative sufficiently proves, I was a very bad man at that time, and I now say it with shame and sorrow, yet no woman in distress ever appealed to me in vain, either for pecuniary assistance or for the more hazardous aid which protection from villainy called for. I told the girls to get everything in readiness for a sudden departure, but to be exceedingly cautious in their movements, lest their male companions should discover their purpose, for they were desperate fellows, and would resist their departure to the death. They followed my instructions to the letter, and one evening, when their deceivers were engaged gambling at a notorious den about a mile from the

hotel where the girls were stopping, shivering with fear and anxiety, the poor things had their valises hastily thrown into a hack, and jumping in themselves, with one of our men as a guard, were driven rapidly away, and were soon on the cars, traveling toward their forsaken but still beloved home. The hotel clerk, who had a grudge against one of my gang, soon learned that the girls had fled, and tracing out my agency in the matter, informed the man who had betrayed the youngest girl that I was the principal actor in the transaction.

That night, as I was sitting at a faro table, one of the cowardly villains approached within six paces of me, drew a pistol from the breast-pocket of his overcoat, pointed it at me, and deliberately fired. A general movement among the occupants of the room caused me to look up from the table, upon which my attention had been riveted by my interest in a large stake thereon; when, perceiving the intention of my now bitter enemy, I reached for my pistol, which was in a back pocket of my pantaloons; but before I could draw it he fired, planting the ball just under my right ribs. I fell to the floor, and remained unconscious of all that was passing around me for nearly half an hour, and was then taken to my temporary home, where a surgeon extracted the ball from my side. Several of my companions, leaving others to care for me, pursued the rascal who had shot me, overtook him in company with a comrade, and gave them both a beating such as they would be likely to remember for the remainder of their lives.

The wound I had received was both painful and troublesome, confining me to the house for some twelve months.

My "pals" were not idle during my illness, and succeeded in gathering together from the region around nearly \$20,000. But Texas is no Utopia for a burglar, as many can testify to that truth from sad experience. Woe unto him who has the misfortune to be caught in any predatory act by the excited populace or the numerous vigilance committees. These semi-military organizations, generally composed of men who are themselves refugees from justice, but now in possession of some local interest, or those who have suffered personal loss at the hands of horse-thieves or burglars, will only grant a long rope and a short shrift to the desperado who falls into their hands and under their merciless law.

Off to Jersey City—Highway Robbery and Arrest.

On recovering from the more immediate effects of my severe wound I went to Jersey City, where I committed highway robbery, and secured something worth about \$6,000. Again I found that a transgression of laws, both human and divine, is followed by an inevitable penalty. I was pursued, was compelled in my flight to throw away the valuables I had stolen; yet after all was caught, caged, tried, and sentenced to three years and six months' incarceration in Trenton prison. My friends did everything in their power to get me off, but without avail.

At the expiration of my term of sentence I was released, only to renew my depredations upon society, which was in a great measure owing to the fact that I had not been approached, while in prison, in a kindly and genial manner on the subject of religion; and I felt on my release, as though there was nobody in the

wide world who cared for me—no one to remind me of the wrongs I had perpetrated, the retribution I had subjected myself to, the bodily pains I had suffered and was still to suffer from wounds received in fights, brawls, and robberies. I was simply an outlaw, whose hand was against every man; and what else could I have expected but that every man's hand would be against me?

Arguing in this strain, and feeling thus bitterly impressed toward that "society" from which I was an outcast, no sooner was I released from my tedious imprisonment than I again entered upon the work of my profession, and committed thefts, frauds, robberies, and depredations of various kinds in every direction, as opportunity or temptation presented itself. An unfortunate entry into a mercantile establishment led to my second apprehension and conviction. Another term of three years and six months' imprisonment at Auburn was my doom, and I served it out to the bitter end.

My Prison Life.

My prison life was a hard one, for I was unchanged in heart, and very bad, with no knowledge of the simple truths of Christianity to console me. In the dark hours of the night, the wrongs, the outrages, the imminent necessity for murder (happily not perpetrated), and the grief and agony of mind which I must have inflicted upon those whose property I had stolen, the suffering and sorrow I had entailed upon those whose duty it was to watch that property, and, more than this, the sorrow I had caused my good old father, came back to my remembrance in my dark and gloomy cell, tormenting my soul and filling my heart with grief and

anguish. My rebellious nature, ever at war with those just and wholesome restraints which the laws have placed in the path of the evil-doer, was not to be restrained by the arbitrary but essential rules governing the prison management, and I was frequently disciplined for the violation of those rules, both by confinement in a dark cell and being subjected to other terrible punishments.

While confined in a dark cell I was supplied with only four ounces of bread and half a pint of water every twenty-four hours.

In both prisons I was loaded with the ball and chain—the “ball” weighing seventy-five pounds, the chain thirty pounds; and I was put at work in the stone quarry because I had never learned a trade. My conversations with prisoners led to a knowledge of the prominent causes of crime, dissipation, and general bad behavior; and I found that a great deal of it grew out of the harsh treatment to which the men had been subjected during childhood and early youth. Many of them were driven from their homes by cruel fathers or mothers, and were thus thrown at a tender age upon their limited resources, and compelled by sheer necessity to steal, as the easiest way to obtain the requirements of life and such indulgences as their crude and uninstructed minds craved for. Blows and harsh words change the very nature of children, and they fly from the parents and homes they have learned to hate, out into the world, and become either a burden on or a curse to society.

Another cause of crime pregnant with terrible consequences is neglect on the part of parents to teach their children the difference between right and wrong, the nature of each, and the results which inevitably

follow—on the one part, reward and happiness; on the other, punishment and misery.

Oh! my dear readers (whom God hath blessed with offspring), be *kind* to your children; for remember that affection, obedience, and good behavior are the natural sequences of gentle words, mild admonition, and kind treatment; while hatred, rebellion, and crime are the certain results of cruelty, harsh rebuke, and bitter invective.

CHAPTER VI.

Death and Anguish, but no Repentance.

AT the expiration of my term at the Auburn prison I came down to the city of New York, and lived a quiet and somewhat inoffensive life for some time.

One day, while standing at the corner of Broadway and Bleecker Street, a policeman of the Broadway squad, who knew myself and father, came behind me, and touching me gently on the shoulder to attract my attention, asked if I cared anything for my father. "Yes," I answered, "I do, for he has always been kind to me." "Well, he is supposed to be dying," said the officer, "and you had better go see him at the old home." Thanking the good-hearted policeman, I hastened across town, and soon reached the house, and asked the servant if my father was very ill. "Yes," said the girl, "he is very low, and is not expected to live." I hurried up to my father's room, and was shocked to see how changed he was. I asked him to forgive me for what I had done. He said I had never

robbed him or abused him, but that I had caused him trouble and filled his heart with grief. "Yes," I said "father, I thank God I never stole a dollar from you or mother; that is something I was never bad or mean enough to do."

He told me I had wronged others, but it was not in his power nor in theirs to forgive me, because only God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ could do that, and he advised me to pray to Him.

I said, "Father, I do not believe in anything of the kind." The poor old man was crying while I was talking to him so unfeelingly, and he asked me if I ever thought of death, and what would become of me when I died? I unhesitatingly replied: "To hell, where some of my old companions are, and where the rest are rapidly following." This harsh reply after a moment's reflection touched my conscience, and I was sorry for having uttered such wicked and cruel words; but still my heart was like stone, and my stubborn nature would not allow me to express sorrow for my blasphemous language. I felt very miserable, but I could not shed a tear; I wished I could.

Leaving my father, I went to see two of my "pals," and asked them to go to the house with me in the evening. They consented, and we proceeded to the residence of my dying father, to hear what else he had to say to me. When we arrived my father was sleeping, and the servant girl told me the room was full of ladies and gentlemen, not one of whom I knew, so great a stranger was I in my father's house, which might have been a happy home to me had I behaved myself as a dutiful son.

When the doctor came, he told me his patient could not live more than a few hours, and advised me

to take the advice of my good old father, and leave off the life I had been leading. I told the doctor that I did not want his advice, and to keep his counsel to himself. He said my father had often prayed for me, and again he urged me to heed his advice or I would sorely regret it. A second time I rudely repulsed him and left his presence in a fit of anger to join my "pals." Presently I was called up stairs to see father, and he called me to him; my two companions were with me. He said, "George, there is my will. Fifteen thousand dollars are yours." I told him I did not want it, for I had plenty of my own, and advised him to give it to somebody else. My poor father insisted upon my taking it, and I did so, but it was only to gratify him, as I placed no value upon money at that time. I asked him if he had left anything to the servant girl who had attended him so faithfully? "Yes," he said, "I have left her a thousand dollars." Then he said, "George, take my advice. These are my last words. If you don't leave off your evil ways you will either end your disgraceful career upon the gallows or in prison. I have," said he, "but a short time to live, and I beg you to follow my advice, and live a better life." All present were greatly moved by the scene; many were weeping, and some prayed for me; but I was so hardened that the solemnity of the sad occasion made but little impression upon me, and I soon left the room, so that my father could rest and sleep. My "pals" felt very sorry for my only parent, and spoke of his goodness to me, which of course I could not but acknowledge.

As I was sitting on the sofa in the parlor, a lady came into the room, and addressing herself to me in a gentle and impressive manner, told me I had been, in

a great measure, the cause of my father's approaching death. She took my hand in hers, and said, "I am a Christian woman, and I beseech you in the name of Christ, who died that the sinner might not perish, but have everlasting life—I beg of you, in His name, to break away from the companionship of the bad men with whom you associate, and make this house a happy home, and I will do everything in my power to aid you in your efforts to reform."

These kind words, so gently spoken, touched my heart, and I was grieved to the soul; but I told the good lady that while I knew I had been the cause of much sorrow to my father, and acknowledged my wickedness, I was so bound to my companions that I could not leave them. These and similar expressions wrung the kind lady's heart, and she cried bitterly as she left to attend at the death-bed of my father. My "pals," who had heard and seen all that had just passed, said that it was the first time any one had talked to us fellows so kindly, and they, as well as myself, were very much affected by her affectionate manner and kindly words, but we could not shed a tear, so obdurate were our natures.

After the lady had left, a minister came in and commenced talking to me, but in a vein so reproachful and severe, that my combativeness was at once aroused, and I indignantly asked who authorized him to lecture me in my father's house. He replied, in a kindlier tone, "None other save your dying and affectionate father." I told him my father was very considerate, and I was much obliged to both, but that as I did not believe in his doctrine, it would be useless for him to say anything to me with the hope or expectation of altering my views on that subject. My "pals"

old him he might as well talk to the walls as to reach to us fellows. Sadly he left us.

Returning to the room where my good father lay, I asked him if I could do anything for him? He said I could not, that he had said all he had to say, and if I would not heed his last words and change my course of life he could not help it. But again he begged me to leave off my evil ways. I told him that I could not desert my comrades, who had always stood by me, but he need not fear that I would come to the gallows, for I would never do anything to deserve such an ignominious death.

My father possessed great nerve and courage at all times, and even to the hour of his death his fortitude was the subject of remark by all who were in attendance during his last days. On the occasion of my visit to him, as just related, he desired to change his position, and when he was raised in the bed so as to sit up, he said he felt as though he could walk, and insisted upon being allowed to try it. Accordingly he was placed upon his feet, and he walked, being supported on either side, as far as the mantelpiece in the adjoining room, where he stopped and looked at the clock, and then returned and laid down on the sofa. As my good, feeble old father was walking across the floor, I said, "Boys, that's the dead march." I had pillows placed under his head and shoulders so that he could rest with comfort, and then retired from the room at the suggestion of my "pals," who expressed it as their opinion that he could not live much longer. Their surmises proved correct, for after the lapse of half an hour I was notified that my father was dying. I hastened to his side, and found the intelligence but too true. My severest trial had

now come, and in an agony of conflicting emotions I begged of him to speak to me, to look up at me ; but it was too late—he could neither hear my voice nor see my face : his eyes were glazed, although directed to me. Gently, and with a filial affection that came too late, I closed the lids over those eyes that were bent on mine with paternal regard, even as the light of life left them.

With sorrow and anguish I followed my dear father's remains to their last resting-place, and turned away a sadder, but not a wiser man. Returning to my now desolate home, I gave all the furniture to the servant girl who had so faithfully attended my father in his declining years and final illness, and among others I distributed various sums of money for the attention and care they had bestowed upon the "author of my being."

CHAPTER VII.

Drunkenness—The Bible—City Missionaries.

THE shock inflicted upon me by my father's death, and the deep despondency that followed, now caused me to drink more deeply than ever before, and I was almost constantly intoxicated; sometimes, indeed, half crazy under the influence of the poisonous compounds, "the dark beverages of hell," called spirituous liquors.

My money was running lower and lower, the far banks taking a large percentage of it, and an endless round of dissipation at last left me with but a small

amount on hand. Fights and quarrels were of every-day occurrence during my mad career, and I was frequently injured by the fists, bludgeons, or knives of my antagonists. The effect of wounds and contusions received in these broils and contentions, added to the consequence of such a free indulgence in the "doctored" liquors sold at the saloons I frequented, told severely upon my health, and so nearly broke me down that I could scarcely walk, and at last I was compelled to lay up for repairs. One year of misery was the corporeal punishment I received for a year of deviltry, which exactly balanced the account between Satan and myself, for one twelvemonth at least.

Sad reflections often filled my soul in my confinement and sickness, and as I had often heard of the consolation to be derived from reading the Bible, one day, as I was convalescing, I strolled out and bought a copy of the sacred volume, which I read a portion of, from time to time. But one day my "pals" discovered it in its place of concealment, and they made a great deal of fun over it at my expense. One of them got some yellow paint and without my knowledge daubed it between the leaves of the Bible, so that when I came to read it again I could not open it. After that it was thrown about the room until it was completely destroyed. There was a good Christian lady in the house, who, when she heard of the fate of my Bible, told us that she would pray to God that the time would come when we would learn to reverence his Holy Word.

Occasionally the home missionaries, both men and women, would come to us and give us good advice, begging us to turn to Christ as our only refuge from that shame and wretchedness which were sure to fol-

low our footsteps through life, if we did not turn to Him for forgiveness and relief. These good people, I am sorry to say, were often abused, and sometimes ill-treated by members of our gang, so that they became discouraged, and went away sad and disappointed.

There was one good lady in particular, who was very anxious to save our youthful "planner," Jimmy, at that time only fourteen years of age. She followed him up for four months, industriously and persistently seeking opportunities to give him good advice; but he seemed to fear her, and would run away whenever he saw her coming. He would dodge into drinking saloons or down into some basement or other place to avoid her, although occasionally she succeeded in commanding his attention for a short time. But her advice was all to no purpose; it fell upon indifferent ears, and Jimmy continued to be the same "hard character," and perseveringly pursued the old beaten track towards perdition. And yet Jimmy was truthful and honorable in his dealings with us, and we never hesitated to trust him implicitly.

CHAPTER VIII.

Devilish Snares—Another Robbing Expedition— The Grave-yard Ghost.

AN experience of many years among men and women whose pursuits were the most disreputable known, qualifies me to speak with a certain degree of authority concerning the dangers that beset the path unwary. I cannot too earnestly warn the

parents, especially of poor girls, against the infernal snares that are set and the devilishly devised nets that are spread to entrap their daughters, many of whom, in this day and generation of overdressing and lashy jewelry, are only too easily induced to step aside from the paths of virtue by temptations which are held out to them in the shape of gilded gewgaws and fashionable finery. Country girls are, most of all, exposed to the wiles of those black-hearted villains who visit the rural districts pretending to be merchants, physicians, or anything else that will answer their purpose, but whose real calling is that of "procuring" girls for disreputable purposes. The "procurer" is the vilest beast in human form; so vile, indeed, that the majority of burglars would scorn to associate with one of them.

The next expedition we went upon was to the northern part of the State of New York, intending to camp out in some secluded spot, but within a few hours' reach of several villages. While traveling, our personal effects, and particularly our baggage, was always confined to the least possible dimensions, as it was no part of our programme to be impeded in our journeys by anything superfluous, or, indeed, by anything that could be conveniently dispensed with. Our tools, clothing, masks, and disguises received the greater share of our attention.

On the occasion of this burglarious venture a portable tent was our principal care, and this we started off with from the railroad just as the "shades of evening were closing o'er us," and made direct for a point central to our contemplated area of action. We reached, in the course of an hour's travel, the edge of a dense wood, into which we penetrated a short dis-

tance, and there pitching our tent, we settled down for the night. At daybreak three of our number started out on a voyage of discovery, and soon observed that we had unwittingly pitched our tent upon a portion of the land embraced in a cemetery or grave-yard; the piece of woodland being only separated from the grave-yard proper by a dilapidated picket fence, while the whole was well defined by a rudely constructed stone wall, overgrown by moss and creeping vines. Setting aside the associations which naturally suggested themselves to our imaginations, no place within the radius of a thousand square miles could have answered our purpose better than the peculiar one we had so unconsciously selected.

From this solemn, and, to the thoughtful mind, most sacred place, we could safely sally forth to prey upon the unsuspecting residents of all the region within our reach; and avoiding, for the present, the nearest town, return and rest in comparative security from our rapacious raids.

Here we remained for nearly three months, always carefully making our exit from the woods at the most distant point from the immediate city of the dead, fearing we might stumble upon some solitary mourner, or perchance have to confront a funeral procession of rueful rustics.

This particular grave-yard, like all others, was not without its traditional ghost, as one of our gang was solemnly informed by an ancient beldame living midway between the cemetery and the town. Its veritable existence was duly vouched for by the trembling informant, for she had beheld it "with her own eyes"—which eyes, it must be allowed, were better witnesses to the truth of what she affirmed than any others that

he might have borrowed for the occasion could possibly have been. The problematical form of the ghost was not well defined, as far as could be gathered from a redundancy of cross-questionings, because it was simply "white," and as color in itself has no shape, we must forever remain in utter ignorance of the configuration of this identical spirit of good or evil.

Let it suffice, however, that the apparition under consideration was indeed a "white" one, and it will answer the purpose of a sequel which I will now relate.

One night, when the moon was in its last silvery quarter—thus indicating its preference for a specie currency—as our "heavy villain," a big, burly fellow, somewhat boastful, and of course, being a braggart, possessing an innate disposition to avoid all personal danger, was returning from the adjacent village, along the old, weird-looking, ivy-covered wall bordering the grave-yard, he was suddenly startled by a white something, which arose, as it were, out of the ground, and sped away with the fleetness of a deer. Devoutly believing that he had seen the ghost that belonged to the grave-yard, our nervous friend, whom we never employed on missions of danger, started for our tent at the top of his speed, and shortly reaching it, precipitated himself head-foremost within its folds. Three of our "pals" were lying in the tent, dozingly awaiting my coming to announce the programme for the night, when our burly friend introduced himself so unceremoniously into their midst, and sank down, exhausted and panting, upon the ground. Of course the first thought of the men was that we had been traced by the constables, and that our arrest was certain. Consternation seized upon them, and for a few minutes all was hurry and hot haste in the prepara-

tion for immediate flight; but the almost breathless fellow hastily explained the cause of his abrupt appearance by asserting that the old lady had told the truth about the grave-yard ghost, for he had seen it "with his own eyes."

The day before we folded our tent to silently steal away, one of our gang, while coming toward our camping-ground, came suddenly upon a white cow grazing by the side of the grave-yard wall. Old Whitey started and ran, kicking up her heels and angrily tossing her head, no doubt in remembrance of the fright she gave and received on the very night our comrade rushed into the tent as though the ghost of Hamlet's father was at his heels.

CHAPTER IX.

A Jeweler Spared and his Stock Untouched— "Watchman, tell us of the Night!"—Mas- querades—The Pickpocket's Harvest.

WHILE tenting in the wood, we had been careful to operate at a considerable distance from our rendezvous, as it was clearly our best plan to leave the town nearest us for the last sortie ere making our exit from that part of the State. It was time now, however to try a racket in the town above indicated, and with that object in view, Jimmy called upon a jeweler for the purpose of taking a look at his stock and studying the general arrangement of the store.

Our "planner" was an innocent and good-looking young fellow, so that the jeweler, not suspecting it

the least the object of his call, showed his goods without hesitation, and talked freely with his visitor. After getting the hang of things, Jimmy returned and gave us his plan. Owing to the position of the store and its surroundings, the most favorable method of procedure, in his opinion, was to effect an entrance at the front door, as it was partially screened from general observation, and then act according to circumstances. When night came, three of us proceeded to the store, while three others kept watch and guard near by. In about five minutes' time we succeeded in opening the door without having made noise enough to be heard six feet from where we stood, beneath a projecting porch. Jimmy was the first to enter, and we were all inside the store in a second of time. A light was burning, and we were about to commence work by packing up such articles as were handiest to get away with, when a head and pair of shoulders appeared from behind the counter, and Jimmy at once recognized the former as the property of his friend the jeweler, who had so kindly entertained him in the morning. The storekeeper had been placidly reposing upon a lounge, and was so firmly clasped in the arms of Morpheus that our quiet entrance had not aroused him, and it was not until the rather careless tread of one of our men awoke him from his slumber, that he knew of our intrusion. He now looked about him in amazement until his eyes were directed to Jimmy, and then he appeared fully to understand the motive of our midnight call. Expressing surprise and regret on discovering his visitor of the morning to be a burglar, he was about to follow up his remarks with an expostulation, when Jimmy interrupted him by exclaiming, "Hold on, now! No

preaching! I am running this store! You keep quiet and be thankful if we spare your life!"

"Well," said the jeweler, "you may as well take my life as ruin me. This little stock is all I possess in the world; and if you have any mercy, or hope to have any shown you on the judgment day, I hope you will not bring ruin and distress upon myself and family by depriving me of my only means of livelihood.

To this appeal our hearts were not entirely indifferent, and when he again addressed himself to Jimmy reproaching him in gentle tones for having betrayed him, at the same time manifesting great distress of mind, we relented, and agreed to leave him in quiet possession of his worldly goods, provided he made no attempt to have us arrested by raising an alarm. This he promised to do, and then we left him, warmly thanking us, and calling God's blessing upon our heads for our humanity to him and those dependent upon him for their daily bread. The promise of silence he had made was faithfully kept, and it was well for us, as within two squares of the store we met a watchman, whom we passed in a careless, rollicking way, one of our party singing "Watchman, tell us of the night."

Returning to our tent, we held a consultation, and concluded, after due deliberation, to pack up and be off, each one taking a different route; but we were all to shape our course for New York city, and reunite at a rendezvous (previously determined on) which had served us often before as a "house of refuge" in similar straits.

My good fortune was again in the ascendant. I was the first to arrive, though each succeeding day brought a new addition to our band, until the mustering

roll was filled with the exception of one. Poor "Billy" found that the reality of a human form clad in the garb of a policeman was more to be feared than the harmless cow of the cemetery. He was arrested in Newburgh on suspicion, and detained for several days, but fortunately succeeded in informing us of his perilous predicament. We immediately consulted with the legal firm that we employed when in any difficulty, and by dint of their ability and forensic eloquence, in conjunction with a liberal distribution of greenbacks among the virtuous officials of high and low degree, our victory was complete. Possibly a little "hard swearing" tended materially to influence the "court" of that venerable and terraced city.

Again we whiled away our time, and fooled away our money, visiting faro banks and other gambling dens, patronizing theatres, circuses, picnics, balls, and masquerades, all in a greater or less degree nurseries of crime. I found the theatres to be the least objectionable of the public resorts, as they present fewer opportunities for the commission of crime. But the best and safest plan is for parents to keep the younger members of their families away from all places of such a questionable character.

The masquerade is, however, the devil's stamping ground, and the well-dressed maskers are his special agents, whom he directs and uses for his worst conceivable purposes. One of these satellites of his "Satanic majesty," in the disguise of some fanciful or historical character, will mingle with the promiscuous gathering of men, women, and girls, and by means of a fine show of costume and a free use of plausible lies, will accomplish more serious mischief in an hour's time than he could effect during a month's

visitations at the home of his intended victim, when the watchful eyes of a prudent mother are ever upon the man who seeks the hand of her daughter. Screened by a mask, he can venture upon proposals which are too often entertained; but should his advances be met with resentment, he can slip away, and in an instant disguising himself beneath the ample folds of a "domino," escape the just penalty of his villainous designs.

The pickpocket hails the advent of the masquerade season with delight, for it is his harvest-time, and he retires from the gay and festive scene with a plethoric purse but a somewhat palpitating heart, for the pickpocket is never without a nervous apprehension of discovery.

To recount my adventures, mishaps, and hair-breadth escapes up to the eventful night when I first heard the voice of the great revivalist, Mr. Moody and his sweet-voiced coadjutor, Mr. Sankey, would simply be a recapitulation of what has already been told, and I will now hasten on to briefly recount the most important event of my life.

After having suffered a long spell of sickness, and deep distress, I got around again, and began to look out for an opportunity to replenish my nearly exhausted purse.

CHAPTER X.

The Hippodrome—Moody and Sankey—The Love of Christ.

ONE evening as I was strolling about the neighborhood of the Hippodrome, I was attracted by the crowds that were wending their way towards the

famous building, and it appeared very strange to me that so many people could become interested in such proceedings. After a moment's reflection I concluded that, as far as religion was concerned, there could be nothing in the discourses of Mr. Moody of any particular interest to me ; but I thought if I could make the occasion one of pecuniary profit to myself, I might at least venture within the walls of that vast structure, which was now resounding with those Biblical truths made clearer and more potential than ever before by the great evangelist, whose clarion voice I could hear as I stood on the sidewalk without.

At last I concluded to enter the Hippodrome, but with no good purpose in view. Once inside, I was surprised and considerably abashed on beholding an overflowing assemblage of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen, numbering many thousands, all of whom my guilty conscience seemed to tell me were well aware that I was a burglar, a gambler, and a thief. I scarcely dared take a seat, as I firmly believed that if I did so, every decent person in the building would leave in disgust. My utter unworthiness was uppermost in my mind, and on catching the purport of a few impressive words uttered by Mr. Moody, I felt like some guilty wretch who had come to desecrate a temple devoted to the service of Almighty God. All this occupied but a moment of time, as, in the world of thought, events crowd rapidly upon each other, and I was conducted to a seat with scarcely a minute's delay by one of the polite and attentive ushers. Even this kind and thoughtful act had a tendency to lead me on, as the sequel proved, nearer to God, for I felt at once as though I was welcome, no matter who or what I was, and I sat down with a lighter heart.

Mr. Moody's words and manner, and Mr. Sankey's fine singing, the vast crowd, and the general novelty of my surroundings, somewhat bewildered me; but I was more interested than ever before in services of such a character.

After the benediction was pronounced by one of the numerous celebrated ministers who assisted Mr. Moody, I left the building and strolled thoughtfully down Fourth Avenue and over towards the Bowery. God, through the instrumentality of the great preacher, had gained an advantage that night, but the devil was so near the complete possession of my soul, that he could not think of relinquishing his hold upon it without a struggle; and so he came to me with one of his most powerful and effective agencies—the rum bottle—and the good impression made by the words of God as spoken by Mr. Moody and his powerful auxiliaries was entirely obliterated. That night was passed in a drunken debauch, and the morning found me very miserable in mind and suffering from a racking headache and a terrible nausea, which admonished me that I must find employment for my mind in the exciting episodes of my calling, for when engaged in the routine of my profession drunkenness was not for a moment to be thought of. I remembered my experience at the Hippodrome with pleasure, and yet I did not go there again for several nights; but some (to me) mysterious power appeared to be drawing me towards the source of all happiness—the spiritual presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. After suffering a severe struggle in my mind, and enduring it as best I could, an inclination to again hear Messrs. Moody and Sankey came strong upon me. Reflecting on my past career, stubbornly resisting the inclination, hesitating, doubting,

[at last conquered all these mental obstacles, and again visited the Hippodrome; but, I must confess, without much hope or expectation of being benefited by what I might hear.

This time Mr. Moody dwelt upon the love of Christ, and his wonderful goodness in accepting all who came to him with a contrite heart, asking forgiveness for past transgressions. "Did you ever hear of one coming to Jesus," asked Mr. Moody, "that he did not accept? He don't care what position in life you hold; no matter how low down you are; no matter what your disposition has been: you may be low in your thoughts, words, and actions; you may be selfish; your heart may be overflowing with corruption and wickedness—yet Jesus will have compassion upon you. He will speak comforting words to you, nor treat you coldly or spurn you, as perhaps those of earth would, but will speak tender words, and words of love and affection and kindness. He knows what poor, frail mortals we are, and how prone we are to sin. He will have compassion upon you. He will reach out his tender hand and touch you as he did the poor leper. You will know the touch of his loving hand—there is virtue and sympathy in it." Such were the affecting utterances that seemed to meet my case exactly, and I thought Mr. Moody was especially directing them to me. I was touched to the heart, and for the first time in years I bowed my head and wept. The tender and loving hand of Jesus had touched the well-spring of my soul, and let the pent-up waters flow. The tears I shed were bitter, burning, scalding ones to me, but I felt relieved, and much happier than I had ever felt before. At the conclusion of Mr. Moody's discourse I went to the inquiry room, and listened at-

tentively to the general conversation, and to the good advice given to young converts, but I did not say much myself, for my heart was too full for utterance.

When I left the Hippodrome that night I felt as though I was leaving a place where I should love to remain for the rest of my life, and it was with great reluctance that I took my departure.

CHAPTER XI.

The Contest between the Spirits of Good and Evil—The Good Policeman—The Temperance Meeting—The Kind and Gentle Lady.

WHEN I reached the street, the cold, wicked world was again before me. I had no honest occupation to follow. I knew not what to do, unless it was to steal. I was despondent, and the devil was at hand to offer his kind of consolation to me, which I accepted after a terrible struggle against the temptation, and by the time I reached the Bowery I was more than half drunk, but still knew what I was about. At the corner of Bayard Street a policeman came up and took me by the collar. I looked at him and recognized him as an acquaintance. The officer remonstrated with me for having drank to excess, and advised me to leave off drinking altogether as the safest plan. But he said, "I must take you in this time." Still retaining his hold of my collar, he led me along as though he intended to take me to the police station-house. But instead of doing so he led me to the entrance of a large building, and up a long flight of stairs, at the top of which

was a door opening into a spacious room, where about one hundred men were assembled, singing "Hold the Fort, for I am coming," and I soon found that I had been conducted to a temperance meeting, where pledges were offered for signature. Here I was urged by my kind friend the policeman, and by others, to sign the pledge. After considerable hesitation and resistance to their frequent appeals, I at last consented, and placed my signature to the pledge to abstain from all intoxicating liquors.

The next evening found me among the hosts at the Hippodrome, where I received much comfort; but the foe was not so easily conquered, and when I left I again felt the evil one tugging at my heart-strings. Thus for many nights the battle went on between my wicked propensities and the invisible but superior power of Jesus that drew me towards his earnest and faithful servant Mr. Moody. I became more and more interested in the subject of religion as I heard it discussed in the inquiry room, which I continued to visit although I was not noticed much at first. When, however, it was ascertained that my companion "Jimmy" and I were professional burglars, and desperate characters in other respects, considerable interest was centred upon us.

Sometimes we were lectured quite severely, often being surrounded by a dozen or more earnest Christian workers, who, though ardent and enthusiastic, were at least impolitic in upbraiding and reprimanding us for not confessing what we did not feel. Such a course of procedure had an injurious effect upon us; for we felt as though we were put upon the defensive, and must either combat them with equal vehemence, or seem to acquiesce in the sentiments advanced by our

Christian friends, and that we were not as ye
pared to do. All this did us but little good, con
tively, and yet it was all a part of the wise p
salvation that ultimately triumphed.

One night, while sitting in the inquiry room f
very sad and undecided which path to take, the ri
the wrong, a young lady from the church on the cor
Twentieth Street and Sixth Avenue came to m
observing how unhappy I looked, asked me in a
and gentle manner if I was a Christian. I ans
"No, Miss, I am not. I am a bad and desperate
following a dishonest calling, and exposed to d
which may compel me to commit murder at any
I am," said I, "a fighting man, a burglar, a thie
a gambler!" The lady was evidently shocked,
was only by a strong effort that she disguised he
ings in some degree. But this young lady was i
a sincere Christian, and she said to me as kind
any sister could, "Young man, I am sorry for
and while tears suffused her eyes, she said she
pray for me; and she implored me to become a
tlan, to leave off my evil ways, and depend up
Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed to
away my sins. I was greatly moved. My hear
touched by the consoling words and kindly man
this good sister in Christ. Tears filled my eye
deed my subsequent change of heart may be
uted in a great measure to the brief interview I
just related. But my obdurate nature still re
the conviction that, thank God, at last came
troubled soul.

CHAPTER XII.

**A Kind Christian Gentleman—Good Influences—
I Believe—My Trials—Persecuted by Heart-
less and Cruel Men—A Practical Christian
Gentleman.**

ONE day a gentleman accosted me kindly at the Hippodrome, and after talking to me there awhile, followed me into the street, and so deeply interested me by his sympathetic manner, and the affecting language he used, that I was again made to know the luxury of tears. So interested did I become while listening to my good friend's admonitions and persuasions, that I continued to walk with him until he reached his office at the foot of Forty-fourth Street, North River. Here he politely and kindly pressed me to enter his place of business, and so earnestly and sincerely did he urge me to do right and give myself up to the holy influence of the Spirit of God and the redeeming grace of his only begotten Son, that I felt my heart yielding to the influence of his Christian words; and to that good brother in Christ, Mr. —, I feel much indebted for my present happiness, in the sincere belief that I have been saved from a life of crime and wretchedness here, and from eternal misery in the life to come.

My dear Christian friends may suppose that I was now safe from the toils of Satan: but no; that foul spirit of evil still clung to me, and strove to drag my soul down to perdition.

Oh, my dear friends, the struggle between good and evil was a terrible one, and my tortured soul was racked as upon some cruel instrument of the accursed Inquisition.

I had promised the gentleman of whose kindness I have just spoken, that I would avoid the company of my former companions, and that promise I have faithfully adhered to, as far as it has been possible to do so consistently with my efforts to interest some of them in the subject of their souls' salvation.

My visitations to Mr. Moody's prayer meetings were continued. I could not keep away from them; there was an attractive power that I could not resist—something that drew me there as by magnetic force. As my spirit became more softened by the religious influences there prevailing, and less of the rebellious opposition of my former hard nature manifested itself, the good-hearted ladies and gentlemen gathered about my friend Jimmy and myself, and nothing could have exceeded the affectionate regard they expressed for us and the earnest prayers they offered up on our behalf. The thought that no one in the wide world cared for me, had been one cause of my stubbornness of heart; for I felt like an outcast, hunted, as I really was, deprived of all association with those whom it was desirable to know; and now, to be taken by the hand in a manner so kindly, and to be treated as though I too had a soul to be saved, so affected me that I cried like a child, and my melted heart went out to my Redeemer and my Christian friends. To me it seems that the secret of success with men like us, is, first to touch our hearts by kindness, and then conduct us to the feet of Jesus.

The Hippodrome meetings at last came to an end, and I deeply regretted it, for I had become greatly attached to the place, and to many good Christians whom I met there.

Still longing for that consolation which I could not

find outside the Christian fold, I attended a church up town, but there I failed to find the genial, sympathetic, and loving natures I longed to meet again. I was disappointed, and began to lose that deep interest which I had learned to feel in the religious subjects so touchingly illustrated in the discourses of Mr. Moody, and so sweetly expressed in the "services of song" under Mr. Sankey's able leadership, and I wandered about, not knowing what to do.

I had never learned a trade; I was not competent to fill any clerical position, and was not strong enough for any laborious occupation. What to do, I knew not. Some of my old companions held out inducements for me to renew my former pursuits, and tempted me by details of "jobs" to be done, by which I could realize thousands of dollars, if I would but participate in the risks incurred in their consummation. To these offers I turned a deaf ear, but all the while I was suffering the consequences of an enforced idleness. Sometimes I was hungry, often without a place to sleep; an outcast, reviled and persecuted by the more thoughtless and unfeeling of my former associates. Members of other gangs would hoot at me in the streets, using offensive language, even spitting upon me, and throwing disgusting articles at me, thereby soiling my poor clothes, all I had in the world. These men and boys knew that the time had been when they would not have dared to perpetrate such outrages at my expense; but I had learned to forgive my enemies, and pray for those who despitefully used me. I turned away from them, and found relief for my wounded soul in the words of Mrs. Lydia Baxter's beautiful sacred song:

" Take the name of Jesus with you,
 Child of sorrow and of woe ;
 It will joy and comfort give you ;
 Take it, then, where'er you go.

Take the name of Jesus ever,
 As a shield from every snare ;
 If temptations round you gather,
 Breathe that holy name in prayer."

Occasionally, it is true, a little aid was given me by my newly made friends, but I did not desire that kind of help. I wanted work, not alms. And yet the question ever arose in my mind, "What can I do?" And so time rolled on, and my miseries increased. The only consolation I found was in prayer, and in visiting the churches, where I related my experience. But no tangible help came, and I was almost desperat and nearly persuaded to re-enter upon my old and wicked ways, when God, in His goodness, sent me a friend indeed. Mr. LORENZO B. TUPPER, at this critical moment of my life, was conducting gospel meetings and services of song at the Harlem Temple, and on being made cognizant of my wretched condition urged me to resist the temptations set before me, and to depend upon Christ, and Him crucified, for strength to bear my heavy load. These good words were followed by good deeds, for the sincere Christian to whom I am deeply indebted for my still stedfast faith in Christ is not only a professor, but a practice of Christianity. Had not this devoted brother in Christ taken me by the hand, and upheld me at a time when I felt myself falling back into the world of sin, should now, in all human probability, be drifting down the rapid current that sweeps into an eternity of endless woe.

To my best friend, Mr. TUPPER, I am indebted for the idea of this narrative, and its present appearance in book form. From the sale of this publication, my friend Jimmy and I hope to realize enough profit to keep us from actual want, until the times improve, when, we trust that, with the help of God, we shall be able to procure some kind of employment which will be honest and suited to our capacities.

In buying this book, dear reader, you not only aid us in our effort to keep in the right path, but you can be of service to some one, perhaps, who may need the moral conveyed in the preceding pages, and thus be the means of rescuing a soul from the broad and downward road that leads to destruction ; for it is a part of the plan of this publication to appropriate a portion of the proceeds derived from its sale to the immediate temporal relief of men like ourselves, who, when they turn from their wicked calling, know not what to do for a livelihood, until they can search for and find something suited to their abilities.



THE NARRATIVE
OF
JIMMY WILSON,
LATE
Burglar, Pickpocket, and Gambler.

CHAPTER I.

**A Duty—Messrs. Moody and Sankey—A “Plan-
ner”—Treachery, Duplicity, and Robbery.**

THE confessions I am about to make, in the course of this narrative, of my life as a burglar, will, no doubt, shock the sensibilities of the moral and conscientious reader, and it is not without shame that I relate my criminal experience. But I have a duty to perform, and however painful it may be to myself, I am determined not to shrink from its performance, in view of the good my terrible record may accomplish in the field of vice from which I have but recently been rescued, by the grace of our Saviour, through his godly advocates on earth, Messrs. Moody and Sankey.

I commenced my criminal career when only nine years of age. At that time I was a resident of the Ninth Ward, in the city of New York, living at a com-

fortable home with my mother, a brother, and one sister. My father had but recently died. Without censuring any one for my conduct, I will simply say that my brother and myself were prone to evil, and we followed the bent of our bad inclinations until my poor mother, with an almost broken heart, resolved to place us in the Reformatory, which she did, and then left for California.

We were kept in the Reformatory for about two years, when my brother robbed the office, and effecting his escape, joined an organized gang of thieves in Bondout, N. Y. I was soon after set at liberty—to do as I pleased. My brother's career, although a short one, has not been without its inevitable penalties, he having already served three years and a half imprisonment in Trenton for burglary, and a like period in Albany for breaking into a mail car on the New York Central Railroad at Utica. He is now at his home in New Jersey, but he is a "hard case," and, if he lives, will at some future time be compelled to do the State some service.

I commenced to rob the stages, and graduated from that to the more exalted calling of a professional pickpocket, and soon became well known on the Third Avenue line of cars, at the Castle Garden, and at the ferries, where I was recognized as "Jim Wilson," *alias* "Jim Davis." I had two intimate "pals" (companions), one of whom was known as "Tom Bently," *alias* "George Thomas," and the other as "George Stevens," *alias* "Dick Buckly."

"George Stevens" is now pretty well broken up, having been shot several times through the body, and cut in numerous places; but he still lives, and received nothing but wounds, scars, and a bro-

ken constitution for all the trouble, risk, labor, and exposure he has been subjected to. He has suffered seven years' incarceration—half of the time in Trenton, and the remainder in Auburn.

"Tom Bently," who has served five years in Sing Sing prison, is fearfully disfigured about the face and body, having been shot by one of the keepers at Sing Sing while attempting to escape (over a year ago) with other convicts who had stolen a locomotive. Tom has been engaged with me in some of the biggest jobs, and has also worked for some time with my brother Bill.

When I commenced to work on the cars and ferries, I had an idea that I was doing something great, and actually felt proud of the success I met with. The crowd I was connected with soon discovered my ambition and ability, and determined to avail themselves of both my pride and my smartness. They thought I would make a good "planner," which is one of the most difficult positions in the profession; but as the duties of a "planner" have been defined in George Stevens' narrative, I will not repeat them here.

The high opinion my companions had of me was soon confirmed by a great plan I made for the boys. I applied for employment in a large concern, and was set to work just where I wanted to be, so that I succeeded, in about two months' time, in getting a knowledge of all the movements of those employed about the establishment, and especially the habits of those whose duty it was to open and close the store. I ascertained just where the choicest and most valuable goods were kept, the best plan for getting into the building, and the safest hour to choose for that purpose. After ascertaining all these points, I reported to my associates the result, of my investigations, and

they were highly delighted with my proficiency in the arts of deception and duplicity. My plan was adopted without a dissenting voice, and the night was set for entering the store of my employer. In order to gain access by the rear, according to my plan, it was necessary to make our way through a door at a point in a side street, where a policeman was in the habit of loitering a longer time than anywhere else on his beat, and on this night in particular he seemed to have a special liking for that which made the location pleasant for him. He so disconcerted us by his disagreeable presence that we determined to get rid of him by a ruse, and the task was assigned to the one of our party least known in the courts. This confederate, assuming to be highly intoxicated, approached the officer, with his head down, pitching forward, and staggering from side to side, until the guardian of the peace observed him, and at once took hold of him. Our man good-naturedly joked with the officer, and, after getting him in a good humor, asked him if he would be so kind as to help him along to the end of his (the officer's) beat. Everything worked well, and, fortunately, the accommodating policeman, instead of taking our man to the station-house, as we were fearful he might do, led him along the street and out of our sight, with great kindness. We now soon made our way into the store, and, after a few hours' work, got away with a haul amounting in value (cash and goods) to nearly twenty-five thousand dollars. The next morning found me at my usual place in the concern which I had assisted in robbing, looking as demure and unconcerned as the most innocent person on the premises, and no one appeared to be more astonished than I was on learning that the store had been entered by burglars,

and a quantity of the most portable and valuable goods, and a considerable amount of cash, stolen. Of course it would not do for me to leave my place just yet, as that would have given me away. So I remained at work for about ten days longer, and, somehow, I got so idle, and did my work so unsatisfactorily, that I was told my services were no longer needed. The reader will perceive at once the worst feature of this whole proceeding. It was, in my opinion, the betrayal of a trust reposed in me by the kind gentleman who gave me work. I was only sixteen years of age when this occurred, and I did not then fully understand the enormity of my offence.

I was only nine years of age when I committed the first offence, realizing from the robbery sixty-five dollars. I was arrested, but soon regained my liberty, as the kind judge at Jefferson Market thought I was too young to be sent to the House of Refuge. Unfortunately for myself, this escape from well-deserved punishment had no salutary effect upon my youthful mind, and I was soon again engaged in dishonest practices.

Shortly after the above experience of a judge's leniency, I met with a few congenial companions, and we formed a gang which soon became well known in the Eighth and Fifteenth Wards. Most all the original members have met with that certain retribution which follows in the track of the outlaw. Some are in Sing Sing prison, others at Auburn. There are only five of the band now at large, two of whom are at present in this city (New York), and three in Philadelphia. Fortunately, George, Dick, and myself attended the Moody and Sankey meetings, held at the Hippodrome, and have since then led honest lives,

which we will continue to do, with God's help, to the end of our days.

At the age of about thirteen I had been so successful at my business that I did not fear anything, and felt proud of the notoriety I had achieved in its pursuit. My highest ambition was to be acknowledged by my associates as a skillful and daring "planner." In the furtherance of this end I often entered upon little jobs on my own account, so industrious was I in my sinful occupation. Sometimes I would undertake something which it was impossible for one to carry out, but as I had already won the confidence of the gang by my skill and intrepidity, I could almost at any time command the assistance of any member from the leader down.

CHAPTER II.

Narrow Escapes—Good Resolution—No Surrender—Robbery—Code of Honor—Rules of the Fraternity.

I HAVE had several narrow escapes from instant death. About a year ago it became necessary for me to visit my brother in the country, on a little business we had in hand. Indeed, he was planning a robbery for the gang to which I belonged. After I had seen him, in the evening I was obliged to walk to Tuckahoe, on the Harlem River Railroad, and being unable to catch a train, I was walking down the track slowly, not thinking of the lightening express which was now due, and being a little hard of hearing, when

suddenly I was thrown violently off on one side, by the cowcatcher of the express train, down a steep embankment. I was completely stunned, and must have lain unconscious of my mishap for some time, but after a while I regained my consciousness only to find that I was unable to rise, which gave me great uneasiness, as I was afraid some one would discover me lying there, and what was worse, ascertain that I had in my possession certain articles of value, and considerable money, which had been passed over to me for safe keeping. The articles were susceptible of recognition as the proceeds of a recent robbery, and I was again placed in peril of arrest. My guilty conscience was now tortured with the thought that here was I in possession of goods stolen from some person who was, in all probability, mourning their loss—some one who had never wronged me; and it appeared to me as though a just vengeance was at work to compass my destruction. But I knew that I must get out of the trouble, and made effort after effort to recover the use of my limbs. However, after a few hours' rest and gentle exercise in testing the soundness of my body, I was able to reach a depot by slowly limping along, where I got on board a passenger train, and reached my destination in safety, inwardly making a solemn promise to lead a better life. This narrow escape brought forcibly to mind the fact that I had twice before escaped being killed by the cars; and once, when in the act of robbing a country place, I was precipitated down through a skylight thirty feet to the tiled floor of the vestibule below, escaping, almost miraculously, with but little injury.

My good resolution, however, was not adhered to for any great length of time, as I had not then any

conception of a power that would aid me in my good resolves, if I would only appeal to it with faith and in all sincerity. As the solemn impression made by my last escape from death wore off, I began again to think of plans by which I could make a haul. I tried to reason with myself, and I thought the life I was leading might be, perhaps, as good and contain as much pleasure as that of an honest and industrious mechanic. But on further reflection I could not admit that it was as well to be dishonest as to pursue an honorable calling.

How often since then have I regretted that I did not stop at that age and change my whole course of life. What a load of sin and misery it would have saved me from! But with no kind friends to advise me, and prematurely old in vice, surrounded by evil associates, principally men of mature age, was it any wonder that I, a mere boy in years, should get accustomed to this business, and jeopardize my life and that of others while in pursuit of my ill-gotten spoils? That while in pursuit of plunder, lives are in constant peril, no one can deny, and it is well known that a burglar in a tight place would, in all probability, commit murder rather than take the chances of an arrest and twenty years in prison.

With such risks, liable to be incurred at any moment, it will be seen that most of all a man must have courage, he must have coolness, presence of mind and indomitable pluck.

Once, on a certain occasion, in this city, Tom Bently, George Stevens, and myself forced our way into a store. We obtained access without much trouble, but, to our dismay, we were confronted by men who leveled as many "pops" at our heads

but held their fire to parley. They demanded our surrender, when we told them that they must do that themselves, as we outnumbered them, having a reserve of three men behind us; and then, taking out our shooting irons, we told the fellows, plainly and plumply, that if they did not put up their weapons, we would shoot. Believing themselves to be outnumbered, and judging by our determined attitude and emphatic language that we meant business, it did not take them long to comply with our demand. To properly secure them was but the work of a moment, and then we proceeded to analyze the contents of the cash box, finding the ingredients to be \$3,500 in money, and a few trifles of trinkets, and postage stamps, with which we effected our retreat in good order. Had we flinched to the degree of one hair's breadth on this occasion, one or two of us might have been either killed outright or seriously wounded, and capture, with fifteen or twenty years' imprisonment certain, if we had surrendered.

Professional burglars have a code of honor among themselves. When a man becomes a member of an organized gang, he is duly sworn to be true to his associates, even at the risk of his life. He must not be a liar or a drunkard. Men addicted to either of the above vices will not be admitted into the councils and confidence of the professional. No dependence can be placed upon the individual who either drinks to excess or lies, for drink will set his tongue going at random, so that he will be likely to tell all he knows, and if he is a liar, he will tell more than he knows. Such fellows are a curse to all who trust them.

The better class of professionals work together in confidence and harmony. Their mottoes are, "What

is worth doing, do well," and "What is worth having, have it."

Rest assured, that if we had no system—no regulations—thirteen men could not work together for a period of twelve or fifteen years, proving faithful to each other, neither "squealing" nor turning State's evidence against each other. In all my experience as a professional burglar for the past twelve years, in New York, Washington, St. Louis, and elsewhere, I have never known an instance where a man broke this law a second time. I leave the reader to draw his own inference as to the cause of the traitor's inability to repeat his offence.

Death or incarceration constantly stares the burglar in the face while in the act of perpetrating a robbery. I have been shot at many times, but have luckily escaped with only a slight wound, which confined me to bed two weeks. I returned one of the salutes with three discharges of medium fixed cartridges, wounding my assailant in the shoulder, and intending to kill him if I could escape in no other way; for once in the clutches of the law, there is very little mercy shown the "professional," although the non-professional bank robber, who evades the law by merely lending to himself or some confidential friend the deposits placed in his care, is let off with only a slightly damaged reputation. Such sneaking villains have scarcely ever the bravery and nerve required in carrying out an ordinary burglarious programme. Should it ever be the reader's misfortune to encounter an armed burglar, "take him easy," for if cornered he will fight like a wild tiger in a similarly tight place. It is "liberty or death" with him.

One of our adventures occurred at the Capital about

two years ago. Bill Richmond, *alias* Joe Decker, and four more of us, entered a place, and were about to ascend the first flight of stairs, when we were discovered by four men who were on the third floor above. They started to come down in a hurry, when, as quick as a flash, we adopted a plan to trip them up. We got on the outside of the balusters, stuck our feet between the rails, and down they went, head over heels, and one over the other, to the bottom, when we immediately pounced upon them, gagging and binding them in the twinkling of an eye. We succeeded in leaving the establishment with about five hundred dollars' worth of jewelry and eight hundred dollars in cash. The same old way of getting rid of our money was adopted, and, as usual, the gambling houses relieved us of about two-thirds of our capital in a very short time.

CHAPTER III.

Gambling—The Gamblers' Fight—Robbing the Gypsies—A Terrible Battle.

GAMBLING is generally the first step in crime. Many a boy is led away from home by the allurements of the gambling table, as the impression still prevails, to a wide extent, that money can be made at any time by taking the chances against the "bank." It is the very height of folly to suppose for a moment that such is the case. The "bank" always has a large percentage in its favor, even if the deal is "fair," but it is almost invariably the reverse of being fair. Common sense ought to tell any one that the proprietors of gambling

houses could not keep up such elegant concerns, giving suppers, and living extravagantly with fancy women, if they did not have a fearful certainty in their favor. Of course the outsider, or "greenhorn," sometimes wins, and is occasionally permitted to win, which is done for the purpose of leading him on; and then he is induced to try again, and again, in the vain hope of winning every time. Thus the propensity grows upon the poor, foolish youth until it becomes a fixed habit, and it is a hundred chances to one that he ever turns out to be an honest man, but generally his career ends in some State prison.

In this manner I was led astray, and passed on from gambling to stealing in a petty way, until ultimately I became a full-fledged burglar. My brother followed in the same track, and, like myself, he has suffered imprisonment, but for a longer period, as he served three years when but seventeen years old, and afterwards two years in the Albany Penitentiary, while I escaped with only two.

Gambling not unfrequently leads to fighting, as it tries a man's temper and patience more than almost anything else. One night I was engaged in a game of three-card-monte with a cross-grained fellow whom I beat badly. He was very angry, although he did not say much at the time; but, watching an opportunity to punish me, he hung around until I laid down on a settee to take a nap, when he got some red-hot coals and put them into my socks next to my ankles, and then stood back to see the fun. George Stevens immediately threw some water upon the live coals, and so saved me from a horrible burning, but I was, nevertheless, badly injured. Not caring to use my pistol upon the cowardly wretch, I seized an oyster-

, and rushing at him, dashed it into his shoulder, then cut him in the face. He fought back, and he badly in the head with a knife. I had the advantage of him, and was so enraged by the meanness of the trick he had served me, that I would have killed him had we not been separated by George and those who were present.

When I look back at such disgraceful and brutal exhibitions of evil passion, growing out of the practice of gambling, which is one of the worst of vices, I wonder how I could have been so lost to all sense of shame as to have engaged in them; and I now thank God that I have lived to see them in their right light. My affair laid me up for two weeks; but I had been out more than a fortnight when I got into another scrape, which ended in my being stabbed in the neck. My temper would get the best of me sometimes, and it has cost me no end of trouble; but I have better control of it after this last quarrel and . . . A bad temper is one of the worst faults a burglar or a gambler can possess.

After this disgraceful occurrence I went to Philadelphia, where, in making a haul, we were suddenly detected, and had to get out of the store in such a hurry that we left our tools behind us, with such evidence of ownership upon them that we should have been "given away" if we had not left the city before being caught. We started away on foot, and soon reached "Nigan's Woods," a short distance from Philadelphia, and concluded to camp there for a few days. Making a careful survey of the place, we found we were not the sole occupants of the grounds—many of Gypsies; with plenty of horses, and, as we fully ascertained, some money, had also nestled

"under the greenwood tree." We soon came to the conclusion that it would be well to "pipe" our dark-skinned neighbors with the view of investigating their financial status. On the following day I ascertained that the Gypsies had realized some four thousand dollars from the sale of their horses. This we resolved to secure if possible; but we knew well enough that the sons of the forest would not part with their well-filled purse without a desperate effort to retain it. Accordingly, we sought an opportunity to take them unawares, and, after holding a consultation, we concluded to enter their camp at early daybreak the following morning, before they were fully armed and wide awake. Accordingly, we took our respective positions at points just on the edge of their camping-ground just before the gray of morning, and at a given signal we dashed in upon them. Immediately all was confusion, and we soon found that we had stirred up a hornet's nest. The Gypsies, taken unawares, were nevertheless somewhat prepared for a surprise of any kind, and consequently a hand-to-hand fight was soon the order of the day. Pistols and knives were freely used, and we found, to our cost, that our tawny adversaries were no tyros in the use of these weapons. George fought the leader of the Gypsies, and succeeded in subduing him after a brief but desperate struggle. This achievement on the part of George somewhat demoralized the opposing band, but they still contested every inch of ground manfully. I was about to be fired upon at close quarters by a brawny fellow whom I had once prostrated by a downright blow with a club which I had secured early in the fight, when my old chum, Dick, seeing the danger I was in, dashed me violently to the ground, but in so

Going, unfortunately received the ball in the right side of his own neck. There were two women with the Gypsies, who gave us quite as much trouble as any two of the men, and it was only by rough usage that we managed at last to subdue them. Victory at last perched upon our banners, and we secured something over five thousand dollars, with which we speedily decamped, and, employing our usual tactics, scattered in various directions only to meet again at a given place. When we got together, and counted up our wounds, we found that the whistle had been pretty dearly paid for. Three of us were badly hurt, one surviving his injuries only four months after the fracas, and Dick was laid up for two months. We felt as though it would not pay to purchase money at so high a rate; and when our pal died, we mourned the day we had fought the Gypsies. Thus, murder, death, wounds, sickness, and misery were dogging our footsteps, and still we did not see how dreadfully criminal we were.

CHAPTER IV.

River Pirates—Decimation of our Gang—Burglary—Dreadful Death of a Comrade.

ABOUT this time we engaged in piracies on the North and East rivers, making New York city our headquarters. We were successful in our hazardous pursuit, and made a great deal of money, but at a fearful risk.

A little later along in our vicious career we were so unfortunate as to lose a number of our gang. Two, being caught in the act of robbing a dry-goods store,

were made to serve three years out of a ten years' sentence; another died from wounds received in attempting to escape; and another died of consumption, caused by exposure upon the river, and those debilitating practices which are a part of the life of such depraved and reckless men as our gang was made up of. Shortly after this, another of the band was shot dead by a member of another gang for turning State's evidence against a friend of his.

Misfortunes never come singly, and it was not long before we got into another scrape, three of our now greatly reduced number being nabbed while operating on a pen factory on the east side of the city. It was found necessary to employ a very heavy charge of powder in trying to open one of Marvin's strongest safes, and while even that charge failed to effect the object in view, it had accomplished a result quite contrary to our wishes. The loud report reached the ears of a number of firemen at their engine-house near by, and rushing to the store, together with a policeman who had joined them on the way, they soon secured my ill-fated companions.

Our numbers were now reduced to six, three of whom are, at the present writing, in the Quaker City, and George and myself are in New York, where, through Divine Providence, we were directed to the Hippodrome while Messrs. Moody and Sankey were holding their famous gospel services there last April, and were there made to see ourselves as others saw us, and were happily converted to the Christian faith from infidelity.

But before I reach the point of my narrative where it will be proper for me to dwell upon the subject of my conversion, I propose to give some more of my

wicked experience, and record its well-merited penalties. While on a visit to Delaware City in 1872, we had decided on breaking into a factory where there was a large safe. We had broken the outer door into pieces almost, and were about to break through an inner door in a rather careless way, when I bethought me of the death of a friend who was shot while proceeding in the same rash manner on a somewhat similar occasion. I therefore tried the door carefully, using the precaution at the same time to stand a little on one side, when, as I forced the door open, a bullet whizzed over my left shoulder, and the loud report of a gun alarmed the watchman (whose footsteps we could plainly hear), when, deeming it best in consequence of the surroundings of the place to leave the premises, we were not long in reaching our temporary home. A carbine had been attached to the woodwork just inside the room, with a cord attached to the trigger, and when I pried open the door I soon found that the contrivance had been properly arranged, but the happy thought of my friend's untimely end had saved me from instant death.

One night we were all out on the water making raids on vessels—seizing and carrying off bales of goods from a schooner lying at the dock. We had taken one load to our depot and returned for another cargo. An ice-barge was discharging her cargo by means of machinery driven by a steam engine upon the dock. Of course the men employed to get out the ice did not know but that we belonged to some of the numerous boats huddled together at the wharf, so they paid no attention to our movements. Three of our men were left in our boat to receive the goods, while four more of us went for the schooner.

It was dark, and we had the usual difficulties to surmount. Two of the gang had gone ahead, and one was a little in advance of me. This poor fellow's name was Jim. He stepped upon the string-piece of the dock, which had been made slippery by the particles and fragments of ice lodging upon it, and he had no sooner put his foot upon this insecure resting-place than he slipped and fell headlong in among the machinery, the cog-wheels of which, with a cruel, grinding cut, severed his body into four pieces. I saw him fall, heard a suppressed groan, and experienced a feeling of ominous horror run through my heart, for, almost instinctively, I divined the dreadful fact that Jim had "passed in his checks." The voice of one of my companions as he cried out, "Jim has kicked the bucket!" aroused me to action, and at once restored my mind to its normal condition. It would do no good to expose ourselves; poor Jim was dead; so we rushed for our boat, and pulled away from the scene of the sickening tragedy with the greatest rapidity and with saddened hearts.

On the following day we induced a poor wash-woman to claim the mangled remains of our friend as the body of her son, and we had them buried with what decency we could under the circumstances, while the poor woman was well satisfied with a ten-dollar bill as a recompense for the act of humanity she had performed.

Even the authorities did not suspect the true calling of the man whose body was so fearfully mutilated, as they believed him to have been a strolling drunkard who had fallen among the machinery while wandering about the decks of the vessels along the docks.

The horrible spectacle presented to our sight as we

beheld the four pieces of our late comrade, appearing as they did like so much butcher's meat, made a very deep and melancholy impression upon our minds; and the feeling of despondency was intensified when we remembered him as one of our bravest and most reliable men.

And so the boys kept dropping off, one after another, as might have been expected from the risks and dangers to which we were constantly exposed.

CHAPTER V.

Profitless Burglaries—Another Robbery—Advice to Parents—A Mansion Robbed—Sobriety Needed.

SOON after Jim's death we resumed operations upon the land, believing it to be less perilous than river piracy; but subsequent experience convinced us that whether on land or water it made but little difference, for the burglar or the pirate is liable to die an ignominious death at any moment. Very often burglaries prove to be profitless, and bitter disappointment is the only reward for days of planning and a night of toil and danger.

On one occasion, in 1875, we had worked about three hours on one of the strongest safes, and on opening it found no reward for our pains, as nothing but account books and papers were to be seen. This so enraged us that we foolishly did what many other thoughtless burglars have done before and since that time. We willfully and maliciously destroyed the fur-

niture, and all that was of any value in the office, thus venting our spite upon inanimate objects, and causing a bitter feeling against burglars in general, because our insensate act reflected upon the whole fraternity of robbers. As a matter of both principle and policy such proceedings are entirely wrong.

The next situation I obtained, with an eye to planning, was in a furniture store in Delaware, owned by a very wealthy man worth over \$300,000. It was a part of my business to discover that, and it did not take me long to do it.

None but the owner and his wife attended the store, and they were always finding fault with me, so that I had to control my temper and be very patient. But I thought I could afford to put up with their growling and grumbling for a while, as it was my intention to pay myself well for all their disagreeableness. These people were not over honest themselves, for sometimes they would cheat their customers by substituting suits of furniture several dollars less in value than those selected by the purchaser; but the style being similar, the change was not noticed. I tried to justify myself in the thought that it was not wicked to steal from such people, but of course such false reasoning could avail me nothing in the eyes of God or man. I soon gained the confidence of the furniture dealer and his wife, and they gave me a sleeping-room adjoining theirs.

One night, ever on the alert, I looked through the keyhole of their door and saw them counting their money. They had a large piece of leather which they wrapped the money in after counting it, and then put it under the bedtick. When I saw the man taking out roll after roll from the leather, you may be sure my

heart leaped for joy. I went to bed elated and satisfied that the money was as good as my own. In the morning I communicated with one of my pals, and it was arranged that he should find a woman to personate his wife, and the two should call at the store ostensibly to buy furniture, but really to keep the man engaged while I lifted the money and left for home. When they made their appearance to look at the furniture the owner and myself were there, but the woman was in the house. So I left the store in a careless kind of a way, and going up stairs I let her know that there were customers on hand. Always sharp in business and wanting to know what was going on, the woman soon joined her husband, and the coast was clear for me. It did not take me long to secure the large leathern wallet and put for another and far-distant region of country.

Subsequently it transpired that my "pal" had not money enough in his possession to satisfy the woman who had consented to act as his wife, and she threatened to expose us if we did not comply with her demands. My companion telegraphed to me, and I sent on enough to answer his purpose. Again I had betrayed people who trusted me, and I could not but feel that I had acted a shameful part in the whole transaction.

I had indeed become "old in sin, though young in years." Oh, fond mother, remember that the future of your boy depends, in a great measure, upon your influence and instruction beneath the parental roof. And you, fond father, do not allow the cares of business nor the love of gain to absorb the whole of your time, but remember the gravity of your charge—the charge of your boy's career in life. Think of the pos-

sibility of your own flesh and blood becoming such a thing as I, and devote some portion of your time to the proper training of your children. The natural impulse of youth is to excel, and whether it be for good or evil depends upon the direction it receives in early life. "Just as the twig is bent, the tree inclines."

A very large amount was realized from this last nefarious deed, and for a time we "enjoyed" ourselves—if enjoyment consists in gambling, drinking and other low practices—and our funds were soon reduced to only \$2,000. I had squandered in about two months' time enough money to have bought me a house and set me up in some snug little business, in which I could have made a decent and honest livelihood; but instead of so doing, I fairly threw the money away, as though I was fated not to be benefited by means procured in a manner so dishonorable.

At one period of my life, I had become so reckless and daring, that I determined to enter a well-known extensive manufactory in the upper part of this (New York) city, well knowing that it was sure death if seen (which could scarcely have been avoided), and I would certainly have done so, had I not been prevented by my companions, who had to use force before I would consent to relinquish the job.

One cold winter's night, a selected number of us had entered a large private mansion-house on Manhattan Island, and had proceeded up stairs without the precaution usually practiced in such cases, when on opening a chamber door, a burglar's alarm was sounded, and the tramping of feet announced the presence of several persons in the rooms near us and on the floor above. Our leader gave the word to

"stand," and drawing our pistols, we met three men as they emerged from several rooms, and, ordering them to "stand," politely notified them that we should be under the disagreeable necessity of killing them if they did not hand over their firearms. One, more daring than the rest, drew up his pistol to a level with my head, but almost as quick as a flash of lightning, the oldest gentleman of the party struck the weapon down, and begged his son (as it subsequently proved to be) not to imperil the lives of the women. Then turning to us, he said, "I beg of you not to use any unnecessary violence, but proceed to your work as speedily as possible." Ordering the whole household into one room, we placed a guard at the door, with pistol in hand, pointed at the family group, and then proceeded to collect such small and choice articles of value as we could quickly find in bureaus, trunks, closets, and caskets. Then leaving the man at the door on guard, those who were somewhat encumbered with the spoils moved off rapidly, while two others with their hands free followed more slowly as a rearguard. The one "pal" left on duty remained long enough to give us a good start, and then warning his prisoners against giving an alarm at the peril of their lives, quietly turned the key of the door upon them and left the house. After leaving the scene of our midnight robbery, we scattered about in every direction, and then we met in the usual way. Here again coolness and nerve saved us from personal harm and from failure to secure our coveted spoils. So much for courage and sobriety; but nerve strengthened by strong drink will not serve you in such emergencies. Whenever a burglar commences to drink, out of season and in season, on duty or off duty, give him his walk-

ing papers forthwith, or put him on the retired list, and keep out of his company. Be sure a drunkard will get you into trouble, for just at the critical moment, when his services are most needed, he is *non est*.

I was exposed to the danger of detection once myself, from the intoxication of one of my gang, a new member, while committing a robbery in the town of Westchester. One of our guard, placed on duty down stairs while we were operating on a floor above, had found some liquor, which he drank, and soon became, in some degree, helpless. He was found in that condition by an employee, who commenced tying him to a post. On descending quietly, we saw the situation of affairs, and promptly reversing the order of things and giving the employee a hint that there might be a dozen of us around, we gently gagged him, as he was a little noisy, and went about our business. The detention caused by our difficulty in getting our drunken companion to go along with us, came near being the cause of our missing the only train that would have got us off clear. You may be sure we were not long in getting rid of our bibulous comrade after we arrived at headquarters. A drunkard cannot be depended upon as an accomplice under any circumstances.

CHAPTER VI.

Bowery Gardens and Concert Saloons—An Old Man Robbed—Oroide Watches.

OUR party had now got somewhat separated, two or three working on their own responsibility ; so I commenced to do a little business on my own account, taking in all the Bowery "gardens" and concert saloons,

as well as other places of even more questionable reputation. Day after day and night after night I have frequented those disgusting places, always ready, in those days, for any opportunity that might turn up, and many a time coming out with a few hundred dollars obtained either by robbery or cheating at cards.

My readers may not know what kind of places these are, and I hope they never will. They are invariably filled with men and women of the very worst description, and the meanest of thieves are constantly at work among them. Here also may be found men capable of committing any crime known to man. They would drug or poison you for a five-dollar bill, and the landlords are just as bad, for they depend upon such characters for their custom.

I have often wondered why men who knew the character of such places would still venture to enter them, for they must have known that their money and their lives were both in danger while surrounded by such desperate and depraved men and women. Some men think they are too smart to be caught napping in these low resorts, but I have known sharp fellows to wake up in the morning, after a visit to a Bowery or Chatham Street saloon, minus change enough to pay for an economical breakfast of cakes and coffee. The best way to keep out of danger is not to venture within a mile of it.

I remember one night, during my operations on the Bowery, an old and rather respectable-looking man with gray hair, seemingly about sixty years of age, came up to me in great distress of mind, and with tears in his eyes, told me a sad story. It appeared he had been working on a ship, and had been paid off that day. He was roaming about the neigh-

borhood of Chatham Square, when a "ringer-in" of one of the worst saloons asked him to take a drink, which invitation he had not sense enough to decline; and of course he felt under obligations to reciprocate the favor. The consequence was, he became a good subject to be plucked, and the "ringer-in" was not long in "going through" his victim, relieving him of \$95. The poor, foolish old man was then pushed out of the saloon, and when he recovered somewhat from the effects of his folly he discovered his misfortune. He applied to a policeman for advice, and that cool functionary simply assured him that he was a fool to go into such a place, and a *greater fool* to expect any redress. I told him to wait a few minutes just where he was, and I would see if I could get his money back; so off I started, and soon found two of my companions, with whom I returned to where I had left the old man; and after they, too, had heard his story, their hearts were moved to sympathy, and they were ready to help him in his distress.

Telling him to lead the way in looking for the fellow who had robbed him, we sauntered along as though we had no particular interest in his welfare, until, after about two hours' search, the "snoozer" was found. It took us only about two minutes to relieve him of his well-filled pocket-book, and about two more to punish him for his meanness. To the old man we restored his little fortune, and found ourselves in possession of a surplus amount of greenbacks for our trouble. But the hearty thanks we received from the now happy old graybeard were our best reward. After promising us he would never go into such a place again, he left us, with the assurance that if he ever prayed he would remember us.

A professional thief, who is a master-hand at his calling, low as it may be, will never countenance a mean and brutal act, like the one I have just related, particularly when practiced upon a man venerable in years.

Occasionally, when it was prudent to change the scene of my operations, I would go into the oroid watch business. I would engage say a dozen young thieves—always ready in abundance for such purposes—and send them, about a week in advance of me, out among the farmers along a selected road not much frequented. The young scamps, who were well instructed and thoroughly posted in all sorts of rascally dodges, would apply to the farmers and others for employment in the way of weeding, doing chores, splitting wood, or any light work suited to their age. After securing such positions, they would work faithfully for a few days, so as to secure the good will of their employers; and then I would make my appearance with the fine-looking but worthless watches, which cost me only \$2.50 each. Calling at the places where my youthful accomplices were employed, I would represent myself as an agent for some well-known and extensive manufacturer of watches, and showing half a dozen of them, offer to sell one at a great bargain, as I wanted to sell out and go home. Perhaps a farmer thus tempted might not want a watch himself, but I would continue to talk to him until my confederate made his appearance, as he was always on the lookout for my appearance. On joining us, he would exclaim with delight, "Oh, how nice that is! How I should like to have it!" and then he would coax the farmer to buy it for him, and promise to work out the price of it. The farmer, who generally hired help by the month—

a week of which had already been worked out in this instance—wishing to please the boy, would almost surely buy one of the deceptive oroides, and I would go on to the next farm. I sold the watches for twelve or fourteen dollars, thus making a good profit while the trade lasted. But this was only a part of the programme, for the young villains, during their week or ten days of “honest toil,” would take observations, and if there was anything they could secure when the time came for them to leave, you may depend upon it they would take it off with them, and turn it in when they reached our headquarters in the city. They would be pretty sure to bring something to the common fund, as a matter of pride, to show their skill at stealing, and the watches were almost certain to be returned to me.

This was a trick that had to be worked quickly, for when the farmers bought watches for themselves, as they frequently did, supposing they were getting a good gold watch at one-third its value, the deception would soon become apparent, as they were miserable timekeepers.

Then again we would work the “ring business”—purchasing showy-looking, well-gilded rings at three dollars per hundred. These we would have stamped “18-carat gold,” and marked with engraved initials, as though formerly belonging to some lady. These rings we would dispose of at from \$1 to \$5 each, representing them to be pure gold; and as an excuse for selling, we would plead poverty, or give some other plausible reason.

These were the shifts we resorted to when we had made it “*too hot*” in the city, by the perpetration of some robbery that called for investigation, and when

the "detectives," of whom we could say a great deal, were right on our heels.

CHAPTER VII.

Gilded Rings—A Race for Life—"The Way of the Transgressor is Hard."

ALL kinds of robberies, swindles, and frauds have their excitements and dangers, and the above is no exception to the general rule. Indeed, one of these ring enterprises nearly led to the termination of my earthly career. I was out in the country a little north of Troy, N. Y., selling rings pretty rapidly, and I had succeeded in victimizing the rural population to a fearful extent, when the character of the fraud became known, and an excited populace turned out to hunt down the swindler. I was in the midst of a settlement somewhat scattered, but still the people were within easy reach of each other, and the word was passed from one to another that they had been cheated. There was scarcely a family some member of which had not been "sold," and when they heard of the trick I had played them, they became very justly enraged. And now commenced what might be not inaptly termed "a race for life." I had very little start of the angry villagers, and the situation looked desperate, but I had no idea of parting with either my liberty or my money, which amounted to a considerable sum. I threw away about \$40 worth of my sham jewelry, and started for the nearest depot. I heard the rumbling of the coming cars, and not caring which way they were going, I made a des-

perate "splurge," and just reached the track as a freight train was passing by. Glancing back, I saw my pursuers in hot pursuit not a hundred yards behind me, and rendered desperate at the thought of being captured by a large party of incensed countrymen, I made an almost superhuman jump for one of the cars, which fortunately proved to be a cattle car, the lattice-work of which I grasped with the energy of despair. The shouts and curses of my baffled pursuers rang in my ears as I held to the car with all my strength; and now that the danger was passed, I felt a reaction from the recent strain upon my nervous system about to take place, and I almost despaired of holding on until assistance came; but in a few minutes, which seemed a few hours to me, I was hauled up by a brakeman, and landed safely in a baggage car. Some of the men began to ask me questions which it would have been awkward to answer, so I had recourse to the infallible cash, and paid for my passage so liberally among the rough "hands" that they soon left me to myself.

My reflections were not of the pleasantest kind, as the reader may well imagine, while I reclined upon a rough seat in the baggage car. I had just escaped either a terrible beating or arrest, trial, and imprisonment. Again I resolved to "turn over a new leaf;" and going back, in imagination, to my earlier days, though still young, I thought how much better it would have been for me had I been under parental control—attending day and Sunday school, surrounded by moral and religious influences, and learned a trade, or became familiar with some kind of legitimate business, at which I could have worked contentedly. I pictured in my mind a happy home, with all the little

comforts and pleasures which go to make home the most delightful spot on earth "be it ever so humble," and the tears coursed down my cheeks as I thought of my friendless and homeless condition—without a tie to bind me to any place on earth; without an abiding-place where, in sickness or in misery, I could find a welcome, or a tender, loving hand to dress my wounds—I knew not of "the healing hand of Jesus" then—with no gentle voice to soothe the anguish of my soul. Indeed, I was living in a condition the very reverse of this, for I was surrounded by the vilest influences; many of my companions were the most wicked and depraved men and women; I was proud of my exploits, and my highest ambition was to excel my associates in all their satanic practices. I had indeed experienced a bitter verification of the old adage that "the way of the transgressor is hard."

But I could not indulge for any great length of time in such sad reflections, for the danger was not over yet. The victims of my ring fraud might telegraph to have me arrested on my arrival in the city; and fearing such a result, I had to get off the freight train at a depot some distance from the city, and reach our headquarters in the best way I could. A tiresome and tedious tramp on foot made my mad adventure still more painful; so that when I reached "home" I was thoroughly used up.

CHAPTER VIII.

An Extensive Burglary Planned—A Trying and Perilous Position—An Alarm—The Escape—Courage and Coolness Tell.

ONCE more among my boon companions, and with all the temptations to which my wild and irresponsible life exposed me, I was not long in forgetting my good resolutions and spurious promises of reform. We soon had a store in view which we proposed to enter just as quickly as it could be properly planned; but to do this it was necessary that we should break through an adjoining establishment. Such obstacles never deterred us in our determinations, especially when so large an amount as we hoped to secure from this "racket" became the incentive. To carry out this robbery, two of us would be obliged to secrete ourselves in a warehouse next to the store we proposed to rob, which was a duty the performance of which was by no means to be coveted. However, a comrade and myself proceeded to the establishment designated, and under pretence of waiting for a country friend, a merchant who intended to purchase a few goods, we lounged about the place, inside and out, until we found an opportunity to conceal ourselves, and then awaited patiently the closing of the doors for the night. When this was duly attended to, we crept out of our hiding-places and went to work at the walls, which proved to be made of the best materials, while in point of thickness they were not excelled by any that we had ever tackled. So severely were we tried, such an herculean task had we undertaken, and so intently were we bent upon accomplishing that

which we had set about to do, that the morning was upon us before we were aware of it, and we had just time enough left to hide our work and then conceal ourselves before the key rattled in the door, and the porter entered. Now the danger was that the cases and bales among which we were secreted might be wanted for delivery or shipment, and we were constantly tormented with the fear that the numerous hands employed in handling the goods were gradually making their way towards our retreat. Indeed, the sounds were to our ears just such as would be made by half a dozen men removing the boxes and bales which sheltered us from their view; and if once discovered, we knew perfectly well that a search would be instituted, and that the breach we had made in the wall would also be observed. I assure you, reader, that the position we were now placed in was one of the most perilous and painful imaginable. With a stern judge's sentence of "twenty years' imprisonment" ringing in your ears; with no possible chance of escape if once discovered; with fatigue and want of sleep pressing upon your system, but with your mind battling the desire to slumber, as your loud breathing might betray you to your ruin; with hunger gnawing at your vitals, and a sickening anxiety filling your breast, until you are almost ready to cry out for relief—with all these overpowering thoughts and sensations oppressing your very soul, together with the knowledge that the chances of being caught are as ten to one against you—I ask if any amount stolen, even though it be thousands of dollars, could be any compensation for all this? Then, be it remembered, money so obtained invariably proves to be a bane and a curse to its possessor. Out of all the money we have made during

our career of thirteen years, amounting to over \$800,000, not taking into account the stock in jewelry and valuable goods which were "fenced" at the usual discount, not a dollar remains. Every cent of it has been squandered away in the most shameful manner conceivable; and all we have now to mark our way thus far through life is poverty and wounds for the living, and for the dead of our once full gang, endless punishment.

But I must return to the thread of my story.

The porters and laborers worked on, some joking and laughing, some humming familiar tunes, and all seemingly happy and contented at their humble but honest calling. At last the time for closing again arrived, and we were at liberty to stretch our cramped and almost paralyzed limbs preparatory to resuming our difficult task; but weak and disheartened as we were, again we took our small and compact but comparatively powerful tools and went to work right manfully. This time we made our way through the thick, hard wall, into the store, where lay the coveted treasures which had inspired our avarice and nerved us for the work still but half completed. And now we had to toil at the woodwork and shelving, which impeded our way after the penetration of the wall was accomplished, and it was with the utmost difficulty that we could remove these obstacles to our progress. At last the fine lace fabrics and fashion's choicest treasures were in sight, whilst a fine, handsome safe indicated the presence of money in abundance. Our kit was necessarily light, for we could only venture into the warehouse on the first day of our appearance upon the premises (while pretending to be waiting for a friend) with a small, modest-looking satchel; conse-

quently we were laboring under a great disadvantage in not having more powerful tools with us on this occasion. We proceeded to pack up such light and valuable goods as we could conveniently carry, and then attacked the safe—another of Herring's—which we drilled, charged, and fired repeatedly, but still the iron box resisted our assaults. We had lost a great deal of time, and were now getting desperate, as the night was passing away, when an unusually heavy charge of powder made a tremendous report, and in a moment after the rap of a policeman's club was heard on the sidewalk near by. We listened intently, and an answering rap gave notice of our peril. All our bright prospects were vanishing before the stern reality of the watchman's club. Again we paused to listen. Voices could be distinctly heard without. Now, said I, we must start, and be sharp about it, too, for the "cops" are upon us. Of course it was a part of our plan to prepare the way for a retreat from the rear, and this we had done at the proper time, so that now all we had to do was to try the practicability of that avenue for escape. In a moment of time we were outside the rear door, which led into one of those small alleyways or diminutive streets, a very few of which still remain among the remnants of old New York. This little street did not run through the block, unfortunately for us, and we found ourselves hemmed into a pen, as it were, not daring to go out into the larger thoroughfare into which, or from which, the alleyway led, feeling very certain in our own minds that the police would soon examine the rears of the stores whence came the report which had attracted their attention. Now, as good luck would have it, there was a cozy and comfortable ale and chop house,

conducted on the English plan, just about halfway to the corner of the little street and the larger avenue to which the smaller street led, and into this "tavern". In the like house we lounged in a manner indicating anything but that haste and trepidation which assuredly would have impelled into a full run men less cool and experienced than ourselves. Leisurely taking our seats, we called for ale, and sat composedly drinking it and awaiting the *finale* of the alarm. In about the lapse of three minutes we heard the trampling of heavy boots passing up the alleyway. Still we dreaded the watch on the corner, which would, in all probability, be stationed there, and kept our seats, not even glancing at each other. Another three minutes, and two policemen entered the ale-house, looked about suspiciously, spoke a word or two to the landlord, and then stepped out upon the sidewalk. We had glanced at the policemen, and saw, with inward satisfaction, but with no outward sign, that we were not known to them. The landlord looked over at us intently for a moment from his position behind the bar, and then, evidently satisfied with our calm manner and innocent looks, resumed his duties as the genial host of the —.

Thus we sat, calling for more ale, as our mugs needed replenishing, until two gentlemen left in company, then one passed out; and now our time and opportunity had arrived. One gentleman came in, and one was about to pass out, when, by a nod and a wink to my companion, it was made known that we should go just then. So walking, as it were, in company with the last gentleman who left the house, we all three made our way out of the alley into the cross street, and out upon the great artery of the city—a po-

liceman on the corner looking at us, but saying nothing.

Our disappointment can be imagined, and while we congratulated ourselves, and each other, on escaping when detection seemed so sure, we were grieved at the loss of our exquisite tools, which we were obliged to abandon in our hurry and anxiety to get a way from the store.

CHAPTER IX.

Washington city—A Reprobate—The Showcase Robbery.

APPREHENSIVE that general inquiry would be instituted by the detectives and the police authorities concerning our frustrated attempt to rob the store, as related in the foregoing chapter, I concluded to visit Washington City, where I thought I should be safe from personal observation until the affair had blown over; but even here, I soon found out I was well remembered on account of my former peccadilloes, and that I would have to be very careful if I wished to avoid arrest. I "enjoyed" myself for a few days, but could not remain idle, so I determined on making a big "strike." I was on the lookout for something of the kind, when I got arrested on suspicion, and although the authorities could not find nor prove any thing against me, I was incarcerated in jail for sixty days. On my liberation, I remained around Georgetown, Alexandria, and the neighborhood, no opportunity of doing anything profitable presenting itself. But this life was too tame for one whose career had

been remarkable for its excitement, so I bethought myself of Baltimore. My friend and self consulted on the expediency of leaving the District of Columbia, and we determined to start that night. To avoid suspicion, or recognition, we walked from Washington to Baltimore, a distance of about forty miles. Arriving in Baltimore, we put up at the Maltby House, and commenced to survey; but our character, somehow or other, had preceded us, and we were looked upon suspiciously. Just at that time I received a letter from my old comrade George, stating that he was very sick, and would like much to see me. This communication shaped my course, and I was soon on the "iron road" bound for the great commercial metropolis. In Philadelphia I met a stranger, a young man, well connected, but who was far advanced in dissipation. He was "broke," and we determined to raise some money from his "old people," even though we had to rob them for it. However, he succeeded in obtaining a cheque from them for \$500, which undoubtedly saved us from the unpleasant alternative. Arriving in New York, after paying a visit to the "refined circle of my acquaintances," I began to look out again for something "good." Never was there a more apt illustration of the old aphorism that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," than in my case. Two or three of my old companions were out in the country for a few days, so I was not of much use alone. George was still sick. One morning I had just left George, our finances were pretty low, but I expected to see or hear of some of the members of our gang in a few days, so that did not cause me much uneasiness. They were at work in a certain establishment in Jersey. I had just crossed Broadway near

the City Hall, when I met an acquaintance, who, although never connected with our gang, I knew belonged to the "profession." We joined in conversation, walking towards the North River, when I observed a "showcase" (exhibiting a beautiful collection of silver ware) attached to the abutment of the store. I carelessly remarked that that would bring two or three hundred. My companion immediately signified his desire to help me take it, and I (being so long out of "work") determined to run the risk. It was broad daylight, about nine o'clock in the morning, consequently the streets were thronged by people attending to their daily avocations. Thinking nought of the danger, I procured a large piece of pasteboard, and marking on it "Removed to number 438," I coolly and deliberately gummed it over the glass in front of the case. In the twinkling of an eye, I had cut the small chains which held it in its place. One glance in the store to make sure we were unobserved, and my companion grasped one end of the case, while I seized the other, and off we walked with the greatest *nonchalance*. We met two policemen at the corner, and my "pal" pretended it was too heavy for two men to carry, speaking intentionally in a loud tone of voice, that the police might hear, but I replied we had not much further to go, and told him to walk on. This allayed any suspicion which the officers might have entertained, and before an hour had elapsed, the beautiful engraved silver sets were melting in a crucible. This only illustrates to what desperate straits a man following our business may be reduced, and how regardless he becomes even of his own liberty. Money or its value he will have, and, with no restraint on the evil side of his nature, is it any wonder that crime

increases, and the prisons throughout our land are filled to repletion ?

CHAPTER X.

The Money Broker's Window—The Young Men Christain Association—Home and Foreign —Missions George and The Hippodrome.

ONE evening, as I was walking up the Bowery, just before dusk, I noticed in a money-broker's window a lot of gold and silver coin and a quantity of greenbacks. The temptation was too great to be resisted. I invariably carried a diamond in my pocket for occasions like the present, so placing my back to the window, and regardless of the hundreds of people passing and repassing, I commenced to cut a hole in the corner pane. I had already successfully accomplished that part of the procedure, when I was observed by a young man, who accosted me, and quietly asked if I knew that "God was looking at me." I told him to mind his own business; I was not on the "racket." He endeavored to talk to me, and I, irritated at his interruption, lost my temper and knocked him down. The young man got up, brushed the dirt from his clothes, and followed me to the corner, saying quietly, "I am doing this for your own good. He talked with me about God and the Saviour, and I, struck with his kindness, listened. He earnestly begged of me to accompany him to the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association, and he would pray for me; but I scornfully laughed at that, as I never remembered being in a place of worship excepting once, when we broke into a church to steal the sacramental service.

I mention this circumstance because it was so unusual for any one to speak to me about God, or endeavor, by any act of kindness, to reclaim me from my evil life. I would, in this connection, kindly call the attention of our Christian brethren, who are working so earnestly for the conversion of the heathen in foreign countries, to the worse than heathen here in our midst. Would it not be well to endeavor to reclaim those of our own land who utter the name of God only to use it profanely or associate it with a curse? There is not a home missionary, a colporteur, or a tract distributor in New York, or any other large city, but what must be cognizant of the existence of such gangs of burglars or bands of thieves as I have endeavored faintly to describe, and yet, in all my associations with them, I never remember receiving good advice, nor one word of warning or religious instruction, with the exception of only two instances, one of them being that of the young gentleman belonging to the Young Men's Christian Association, as narrated above. My experience in this "new life" upon which I have just entered has been too brief to warrant an attempt on my part to explain the cause of such apparent neglect; but, my Christian friends, I know from experience that the majority of my late comrades and friends have many, very many redeeming qualities which belong to the better side of human nature, and which only require to be skillfully touched by some master hand to heartily respond. If the laborers who so earnestly toil in the "home vineyard" cannot attend to this wicked and deluded class of men and women, could not the force be augmented? All Christians will agree that in this large city of ours it is absolutely impossible for the few who are engaged

in the noble service of "home work" to cover the entire field with any marked degree of efficiency. Would it not be a profitable investment for the public to inquire into this matter, to say nothing of the paramount importance of saving the immortal souls of those erring ones? It has been said that ~~the~~ late Charles Dickens could obtain access to the lowest dens of crime and infamy in London without fear of molestation, when it was dangerous for an expert detective to undertake it. I am certain that here in New York city, if the most notorious burglar could but be convinced of the honesty of purpose of the servant of Christ, a cordial reception would almost invariably be accorded him.

The window pane that I had cut being discovered by the proprietor, I had no opportunity to resume operations, even had I been so disposed. I left the young gentleman, and went home that night very sorrowful, but I think it was more on account of my being foiled in the attempted robbery than at anything my Christian friend might have said to me. However, in a day or two that uneasiness wore off, and "Richard was himself again."

After taking a trip down to the sea-beach, and raising a little money by tricks in gambling, or even more disreputably, I returned to New York, where I happened to meet with three acquaintances belonging to the profession, and, after some conversation, we agreed to make another "strike" together. They had a place in view, and it was arranged that I should visit it, ostensibly to obtain employment. I did so, and was successful, going to work the next morning in the factory we designed to rob. I was now again at my old business (engaged in that branch called "planning," in which my highest "honors" had been

reaped), and I felt quite at home. I soon ascertained that the men were paid on Saturdays, but the money was drawn from the bank on Friday and deposited in the safe in the office. I had worked until Friday afternoon, and after making sure that the money was all right, I left my work with the intention of informing the "boys" of the progress made. I was crossing the Fourteenth Street park when I was accosted by my old friend and comrade George, who had sufficiently recovered to be able to walk about. The meeting was a cordial one, and we sat down, conversing together on different matters. He was very urgent in his inquiries as to what I was busy with, and I told him of the intended night's work. He asked me—nay, earnestly begged of me—not to engage in it; but I thought it was only jealousy on his part, and was more than ever determined to follow out the projected programme. He told me he had something better on hand than my little "job," and only wanted my help to carry it to a successful issue. This last argument of his somewhat weakened me. He had been one of my first as well as my truest friends, whose skill, intrepidity, and honesty I had so often proved, while with the others I had never worked, and knew nought of their dexterity as "cracksmen." After a little more persuasion on his part, I at last consented to throw the other job up if he would let me know the full particulars of his own, and what his prospects were. He evaded any direct reply, saying I should know all before the night passed, and we talked together until about 7 o'clock. He then requested me to walk with him, and I, elated at the prospect of still making a good night's work, readily consented. We walked across the park, and I (absorbed in my own thoughts)

was silent until we reached the Hippodrome, when, as it appeared to me, almost before I was aware of it, I was inside the huge building. The novelty of the thing astonished me for a moment, although my evil passions were aroused at (what I thought) the deception and treachery of my friend. I think I should have lost control of my temper, and probably would have struck my old companion, but I remembered he had scarcely recovered from his long sickness, and I restrained myself. The conflict was fierce, good and evil striving for the ascendancy, and George observed it. He laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said, "Jim, I am going to try a new 'racket,' and see if I cannot lead a different life, and I want you along with me." Just at that time Professor Thatcher, with his wonderful choir of singers, commenced the hymn, "What hast thou gleaned to-day?" and as I looked upon the sea of upturned faces, so solemn and yet so earnest, a feeling of awe, such as I never before felt, overcame me, and as the music arose with its thrilling sound, the refrain being taken up by thousands of voices, I was calmed and soothed. We waited until the meeting was over, and once more in the street, my evil passions predominated, and I cursed my old friend bitterly for what I termed his deception. I blamed him for the loss of my share in the burglary which was to have taken place that night, and ironically asked him how we were going to live. He replied he had a few dollars left, and that I was welcome to half of what he had, and with some difficulty he succeeded in pacifying me. I had no engagement on hand personally. George would not consent to join me in any of the nefarious schemes I proposed, and I was ashamed to meet my other "pals," whom I had so

grievously disappointed. For lack of anything to do, the next night found me up at the Hippodrome, but with no intention of seeking Christ. For my part, 't was merely for amusement, mischief, or something worse, should an opportunity occur.

CHAPTER XL

The Hippodrome Prayer Meetings—The Struggle —Remorse—A Friend Indeed—The Victory —Christ Gained—Remember Justice.

OUR attendance at the meetings continued for seven consecutive nights, numerous kind Christian ladies and gentlemen begging of me earnestly to pray for forgiveness, all of which overtures were received with scorn and derision. I well remember one evening (and it will be ever as a bright oasis in the desert of my life) a gentleman accosted me and requested me to sit down by his side in "the inquiry room." I refused, and he followed me. Placing his hand upon my shoulder, he said, "Now you are one of the boys! I've been there, and I tell you it don't pay." His words struck me very forcibly as his language was clothed in terms familiar to my ear, and I thought he knew me and was aware that I had led a career of crime. I permitted him to lead me to a vacant seat, and after some little persuasion I opened my heart to him and told faithfully the whole story of my life. He appeared much interested and prayed earnestly with me. I was deeply affected and tried to pray, but could not give utterance to a single word. The name

of my Creator and Saviour had never been spoken to me save to blaspheme both, and I could only sob hysterically. He asked me to promise him that I would come to the church of which he was a member on the following Wednesday night, and I readily consented. The next day I was very unhappy, and at night I went again to the Hippodrome. I received some little comfort there during the services, but it was transient. I passed a miserable night; sleep forsook me, and I walked the streets awaiting anxiously for the morning to break. I thought of my past life, and the memory of the horrible fate of my late comrade (whose body was so terribly mangled while pirating on the river) came back to me with strange vividness.

In my excited condition it appeared as if the terrible scenes of that night were being re-enacted, and I could not help asking myself what would have been my doom in the next world if it had been so ordained by Providence that I had slipped as well as my comrade? The answer came with such a weird, startling unearthly sound, "Lost! lost! lost!" that I, in my highly excited and nervous state, turned abruptly about, almost expecting to see a visitant from the "bourne whence no traveler returns." But the darkest night will have its morning, and as the heavy grey clouds were dispelled by the rising sun, my spirit was somewhat in accordance with that glorious morning of day. I had not drunk anything intoxicating for some few days prior to this, and although wishing to abstain from liquor until I had seen Mr. Edward Barner, I was in such a weak and exhausted state, that I partook of two or three glasses of brandy, hoping that I might be enabled to sleep a little. In vain. "Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," refused

the wooing, and as I paced my little room the sound of "Lost! lost!" reverberated through my ears, and in the agony of despair I threw myself upon my bed and sobbed violently. The morning passed, and as the hour that I was to meet my friend approached I grew more calm, and at early night I repaired anxiously to the church to meet the gentleman, who I thought alone could do me good, or relieve me from my burdensome thoughts. My friend George accompanied me, and the cordial manner we were received, not only by Mr. Edward Barnes, but by the minister, Dr. Hepworth, and the whole of the congregation, made a great impression upon me. We prayed long and earnestly together, and on leaving I felt considerably easier in my mind. Yet the load of sin and guilt was still upon me. I was yet in the Slough of Despond. No peace and but little sleep that night. I induced George to accompany me to my room, and as I lay restlessly tossing on my bed I thought I was too great a sinner for mercy to be vouchsafed to me. It would be better to be "up and doing," to drown my thoughts in action, even if employed in my wicked calling. With this reflection, coupled with a determination to commence my work in the morning, I dozed for two or three hours. The next day the struggle was great, and notwithstanding the resolution formed but a few hours before, there was a something indescribable, which prevented me visiting the haunts of my old associates. and. thank God. the Holy Spirit was victorious.

Evening found me again at the church with Mr. Barnes, where, thanks to Almighty God, I made my peace with my Maker, through the Lord Jesus Christ. And oh, my dear reader, if all was darkness and

despair before, now all was light and hope, joy and brightness, peace and comfort to my regenerated soul! After two months' trial (the only happy two months of my life) I was admitted a member of Dr. Hepworth's church, corner of Madison Avenue and Forty-fifth Street, testifying to the wonderful love of my Saviour. A happy day for myself and my dear friend who had been so instrumental in bringing me to the fold, truly "a brand plucked from the burning." That proud position (by the grace of God) I occupy to this day. The struggles and the temptations which I have had to combat against have been such as I hope you, kind reader, may never know, and but for the glorious experience I have had, realizing the blessed promises of my Saviour, "My strength is sufficient for you," I must have succumbed. "Each victory has helped me others to win." There has been a great deal of pressure brought to bear upon me by my old associates, and the letters (containing both promises and threats) I have received from Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, written by those with whom I had formerly operated, would doubtless have enticed me back to my evil ways, but for the care and kindness of my Christian friends. I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without thanking the deacons and members of Dr. Hepworth's church, individually and collectively, for their Christian solicitude on my behalf. Their prayers and religious instruction have materially assisted me to "look ever to Jesus," and, the Lord's name be praised, "he has carried me through."

In conclusion, dear reader, let me earnestly hope that the time spent in the perusal of these pages has not been without its compensation. I sincerely trust that the lessons herein inculcated may be especially

remembered by the more youthful of my readers; that they may plainly learn from these recitals of wrongs inflicted, and retribution suffered, how certain it is that punishment will be meted out in full measure to the evil-doer. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord; and the laws of man are equally exacting. The figure and emblem of Justice with her scales and her two-edged sword should ever be in the minds of young men just starting out in life. She is the Nemesis of the world, inflicting upon those who outrage the laws of man the just penalty of their crimes. She represents on earth the figurative authority to mete out rewards and punishments. Therefore I point to her well-known figure as one to be remembered in connection with these records of sin and punishment. Remember JUSTICE, but over all is GOD, the good, and just, and merciful, ever ready to forgive those who come to him with contrite hearts, and ask forgiveness for their sins, through the redeeming grace and the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.



THE REFORMED CRIMINALS' RELIEF FUND.

It is very often the case that men and women who have pursued a criminal career for a number of years, are, at last, through some benign influence, made to see their wickedness in its true light, and, sincerely repenting their past errors, desire to lead a different life. The bitter experience of two reformed burglars, as conveyed in the preceding pages, will show the reader how difficult it is for such men to obtain the bare necessities of life while they are in that transition state, between their evil and their better lives, through which severe ordeal they must pass before they can obtain some suitable employment. The New York *Daily Witness*, speaking of just such unfortunates, says, "clothing, board, and medicines must be furnished to the poor creatures who come with trembling limbs and broken spirits, seeking relief from physical as well as mental misery."

Substantial aid and practical advice are needed just at the critical moment when spiritual regeneration begins, for it is well known by experienced philanthropists that the mind is illy prepared for moral teachings while "pain and anguish wring the brow" of the poor distressed convert. Under such conditions

the hungry and miserable ones turn from those who offer nothing but words of comfort and scriptural advice, and ask with sinking hearts, "Is this Christianity?" Such practical Christians as Miss Gilbert—"The Prisoner's Friend"—know full well, that mere empty words are lost upon those who are sick at heart and are suffering for the ordinary needs of life, and the Rev. Alvah Wiswall, of St. John's Guild; Rev. Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, Jr.; Chas. L. Brace, Esq., and many other working Christians, who are made the almoners of those who believe in *deeds*, can corroborate the truthfulness of the above assertion.

Those among our readers who have visited the "Inquiry Rooms" of the great Evangelists, Messrs. MOODY and SANKEY, must have observed the friendless and forsaken ones who came to seek salvation, and to find that comfort for their wounded souls, that balm for their bruised hearts, which the world has failed to furnish; and the thoughtful and sympathetic reader must have wondered where those forlorn-looking objects lived, and how they obtained their daily bread.

Now, we ask, what becomes of such men and women after they leave the inquiry rooms? Whose business or mission is it to see that they are encouraged to hold on to the faith that is newly born in their hearts; to persevere in the good cause of Christ; to keep away from their evil companions, and to look for some honest occupation? Can any rational man or woman suppose for a moment that those among the people we have just described, who had been accustomed to steal, would not be tempted to commit some unlawful act when hunger began to gnaw at their vitals?

Just here the work of the practical Christian comes in, and a helping hand is held out to the suffering and tempted ones in the hour of their greatest peril, and in the moment of their direst need. The Managers of the Reformed Criminals' Relief Fund have had ample experience in the line of that timely, direct, and tangible aid, which lifts the new convert out of present trouble, and leads him or her away from temptation; so that these managers are well qualified to do the work needed in the field of usefulness just indicated, and they only require to be furnished with the requisite means in order to accomplish a world of good.

A portion of the profits to be derived from the sale of this book will be devoted to the above purpose, which portion of profit, together with those voluntary contributions which may reasonably be expected from those whose hearts are moved by the miseries of these poor outcast and erring ones—repentant sinners—such as our forgiving Redeemer delighted to save, will, we trust, go far to relieve the more pressing wants of that peculiar class for whom this fund is most especially designed.

Contributions may be sent to LORENZO B. TUPPER, Esq., Treasurer, No. 120 West Street, New York City. Semi-annual reports will be sent to all contributors, in which acknowledgments of contributions will be made.

REV. SAMUEL ALMAN.

A most valuable acquisition to the ranks of our Christian hosts is the Rev. SAMUEL ALMAN, late a believer in the Hebrew faith. This gentleman is one of the most zealous converts to be found throughout the length and breadth of our land. His labors are incessant, and his efforts in behalf of the souls of those not yet within the Christian fold, are attended by the most gratifying results. Mr Alman's sincerity, activity, and fervor in the cause he has so warmly espoused, coupled with his learning and ability, render his services of the greatest possible value to the cause of Christ, and that congregation which can claim him as its permanent pastor is indeed highly favored.

MR. ALMAN has composed an impressive and most touching sacred song, (set to music by Prof. S. H. SPECK,) which he sings in the course of his Gospel services, with much feeling and marked effect. By permission we are allowed to present this beautiful song to our readers. It is one of a collection to be published by Mr. Alman, some time during the coming Fall.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

"Hath it not been told you?—Isa: 40: 21."

Adagio.

1. Have you heard the news proclaimed, How the wanderers

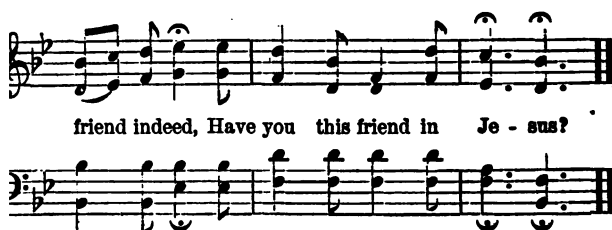
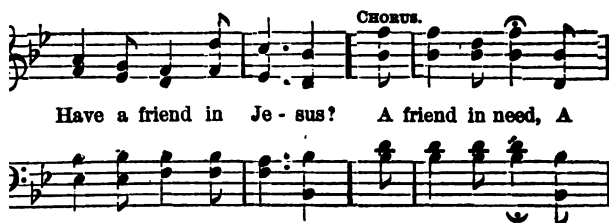
The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

are reclaimed, And the blind, and halt and maimed

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. The treble staff melody includes notes like D5, E5, and F5. The bass staff continues with supporting chords and notes.

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HAVE YOU HEARD?—CONCLUDED.



2.

Have you heard the tidings go,
Into homes of want and woe?
There to make poor sinners know,
What a friend is Jesus?

3.

Have you in the prison cell,
Heard those sweetest notes which tell,
For condemned ones, all is well,
When they trust in Jesus?

4.

In the sick-ward, by the cot,
When the throbbing brow is hot,
Creature helps availing not;
Oh, how sweet is Jesus!

5.

Let your voices then proclaim,
Free forgiveness in His name,
In the place of sin and shame,
Precious name of Jesus.



12.1
12.2
12.3
12.4
12.5









